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XLR8R

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MR. OIZO, SHOT AT THE SUNSET MARQUIS HOTEL
IN WEST HOLLYWOOD BY MATHEW SCOTT.

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Ed's Rant: Hear and Now



Sasu Ripatti (a.k.a. Vladislav Delay and Luomo) and the inspiration for his icy house textures.

Where did we go this issue? A little bit of everywhere it seems. You'll find yourself alone on an icy Finnish tundra with Vladislav Delay and his rescue dog—a metaphor, perhaps, for the way that music saved this experimental-house don from disappearing down the black holes of his mind. We found a rather reluctant Mr. Oizo hiding out in Hollywood, where none of the kids in shutter shades and hats know him as Quentin Dupieux (nor could they care about his experimental films or black humor). All L.A. wants from Oizo is more of that searing Ed Banger pound-and-scrabble, and the Parisian DJ/producer/icon is more than prepared to give it to them—with a middle finger raised defiantly, of course.

While two of electronic music's great iconoclasts anchor this issue, we've got plenty of new people in here as well—we don't think of this issue as "What Will Be Big in 2009" for nothing. Call it "lazer bass," "future blap," "next-hop," or whatever you want, but there's no denying that scissorhands like Rustie, Megasoid, Lazer Sword, and Hudson Mohawke are revamping IDM, hip-hop, and the indie dancefloor with their crunchy, experimental, *hyphy* sounds. *Star Wars* + "Ass 'N' Titties" + Autechre + a case of Sparks might get you halfway there. A trip to Red Bull Music Academy yielded plenty of ideas on who'll be rocking these pages a few years from now; video clips with the founders and participants are available on the Extras section of our website.

Other fresh faces you'll meet in this issue include five take-no-shit girls from Brooklyn—in the form of campfire dancing duo Telepathe and the

shitgaze-meets-Shangri-Las rock trio Vivian Girls—and a gaggle of synth-rock bands burning up Moscow's clubs. London's Zomby chatted to us about cooking chicken and his old-school hardcore obsession, while Kansas City's Murderbot gave us his favorite Belgian New Beat records.

Never ones to sit still, we've done away with our columns after a good run, although you'll still find your favorite genre enthusiasts' contributions in the months ahead. In their place, we'll be bringing you the longer features you've asked for, plus our newest section, Artists To Watch, which profiles acts burning up the 12" charts and file-sharing networks. If you can't get enough of singles, tons of free MP3s are up on XLR8R.com, along with exclusive podcasts from your DJ favorites. We've also added a new Reviews Editor to our team, Shawn Reynaldo; this former program director of Bay Area independent radio outlet KALX doesn't drink coffee, loves his *cumbia nueva*, and comes prepared to dish the freshest albums each month.

This month, we also created a special Vis-Ed magazine, featuring 21 of our favorite artists from our long-running visual-arts section, including Nicola Kuperus, WK Interact, Rinzen, and Bwana Spoons. Those of you wanting more can visit vis-ed.net, where we'll be housing additional info on these masters of pixel and ink.

I'd love to tell you more but I don't want to give away *all* the secrets. See you in March with plenty of spring surprises.

— Vivian Host, Editor-in-Chief

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Mr. Oizo, shot at the Sunset Marquis Hotel in West Hollywood by Mathew Scott.

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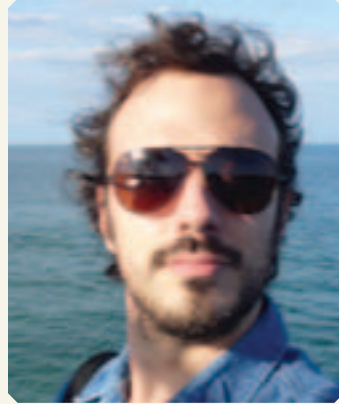
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Marke B.

Marke B. has been writing about nightlife and club music for more than a decade, and partying for way longer. He's also a big fag, which allows him to stay out later, somehow. His current gig is Senior Culture Editor for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, and his essay "Gayest. Music. Ever." was included in the *Best Music Writing 2008* anthology from Da Capo Press. For this issue, he tackles Pharrell's "murse" and the femming-up of hip-hop in our TBC section.



Andy Beta

Hailing from Texas, Andy Beta is currently a freelance writer in Brooklyn. In the past year, he has written about animatronic bands for *Spin*, the state of Chinese rock music for *Paste*, his search for Thai pop music in *The Believer*, forgotten actress Jean Seberg for *Stop Smiling*, and the renaissance of disco edits for the *Village Voice*. He has healthy obsessions with disco dancing, Villalobos, Roberto Bolaño, vinyasa yoga, and the show *Arrested Development*. Beta wrote about Finnish house producer Luomo for this issue.



Mathew Scott

L.A.-based photographer Mathew Scott was born and raised in Portland, OR before getting his MFA at the Academy of Art in San Francisco. He's shot numerous *XLR8R* features in the past, including *Subtle*, *Why?*, *Xiu Xiu*, and *Turf Talk*, and his work has appeared in *Mass Appeal*, *GQ*, and *BlackBook*. For this issue he photographed cover star Mr. Oizo in Los Angeles.

mathewscott.com



Ari-Pekka Auvinen

Ari-Pekka Auvinen is a researcher and photographer from Oulu, Finland. He works mainly with national and international biodiversity monitoring issues, and much of his time is spent developing indicators of the state of nature in Finland. Otherwise this ex-full-time photographer enjoys the peace and quiet of northern latitudes, as well as ringing birds, growing vegetables, and listening to jazz. For this issue, he photographed Luomo in Finland.

biodiversity.fi

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CORRECTION: In issue #122, In the Studio, we incorrectly stated that Plug One is a member of A Tribe Called Quest. He's actually a member of De La Soul.



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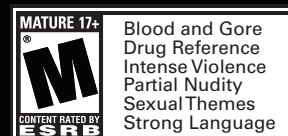
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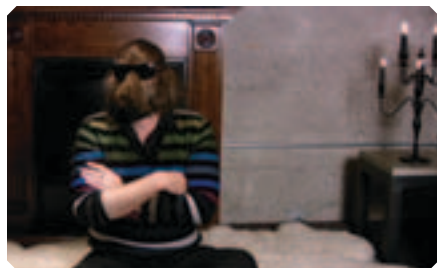
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XL8R TV



LOVE LINES AND LAZERS.

Wondering how to fill that hole in your heart? Want to know how to seduce the ladies *en français*? This month, *XLR8R TV* has your answers. We sat down on the bearskin rug with French electro crooner **Sebastien Tellier**, and got him to dole out advice on all matters of the heart for a very special Valentine's Day episode. We also check in with featured future blappers Lazer Sword, who talk electronic gear and the hustle-n-grind in their hometown of San Francisco.

Check out all the madness at XLR8R.com/tv, and come back every Tuesday for new episodes, including recent shows with Christopher Willits and Brooklyn artist Damien Correll.

NEW CONTENT EVERY DAY AT XLR8R.COM

Check out music news and features, free MP3 downloads, and reviews updated every day, plus photo blogs, music videos, free PDF versions of *XLR8R*, and a whole lot more at XLR8R.com.

PODCAST

TECHNO AND HOUSE, DELIVERED TO YOUR VIRTUAL DOOR, COURTESY OF SPEEDY J. AND DAPAYK.

This month, fill up on podcasts from a pair of *XLR8R*'s favorite techno and house DJs. First up is Dutch techno king Speedy J (a.k.a. Jochem Paap), who offers up an exclusive mix that includes artists like Gregor Tresher, Radio Slave, Loco Dice, and Marco Carola. Bringing up the rear is **Dapayk** (a.k.a. Niklas Wortg) with a live recording of a recent set from Deeper Moods in Los Angeles. Think dark, deep, dancefloor destruction.



Get your lethal dose of *XLR8R*'s favorite tunes, and sign up for our weekly podcast at XLR8R.com, where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum.

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NOVEMBER NO. 122

Interview excerpts with Passions, Hannah Stouffer, and indie studio engineers

Tech talk from Michna

XLR8R TV episode with The Bug and Warrior Queen

The Martinez Brothers' favorite house tracks and need-to-have DJ gear

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DECEMBER NO. 123

Interview excerpts with Drop the Lime

Lords of Apathy's Six Craziest Political Moments of 2008

Artists' Bests and Worst of 2008

XLR8R TV episodes with Carl Craig, Bradford Cox, and Buraka Som Sistema

Shoegaze greatness: Asobi Sesku interviews Neil Halstead, and an exclusive podcast from Damon Way

Audio from Hot Chip's In the Studio interview

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LOOK FOR THE XLR8R.COM EXTRAS ICON

This issue is filled with online extras, including extended interviews, photo outtakes, audio clips, and videos. See them at

XLR8R.COM/124EXTRAS

XLR8R's "New Year Blitz" Contest

Win the latest headphones from Pioneer and new discs from Get Physical and Mr. Oizo.

Still a bit drained from all of that New Year's debauchery? Well, we've got the perfect cure to ease all the head spinning. Our friends at Pioneer—the leader in pro DJ products—have just unveiled the latest addition to its ever-growing series of headphones. The **Pioneer HDJ-2000** is specifically designed for DJs and remix producers alike, and is the premiere companion for those long nights crouched over the wheels of steel or the mixing desk. With their high-quality sound, exceptional durability, and comfortable fit, we're sure the Pioneer HDJ-2000s will find a happy home on your head. As an added bonus, we're offering

the latest from the **Get Physical** camp, which celebrates its 100th release with a special compilation comprised of bangers from the likes of Thomas Schumacher, Italoboyz, and M.A.N.D.Y., as well as the latest from **Mr. Oizo**, *Lambs Anger* (Ed Banger).

All you have to do is answer the following question: **What is the name of the puppet featured in the ad that Quentin Dupieux made for Levi's?**

- A) Spray Can Manny
- B) Flat Eric
- C) Sockles & His Electric Veggies
- D) Jermaine

Winners will be chosen randomly from all correctly answered entries.

One grand prize winner will receive: A set of Pioneer HDJ-2000 headphones and copies of *Get Physical 100* and Mr. Oizo's *Lambs Anger*.

pioneerelectronics.com, edbangerrecords.com, physical-music.com



Four runners-up will receive: Copies of *Get Physical 100* and Mr. Oizo's *Lambs Anger*.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email, and must be received by February 24, 2009. All online entrants' email addresses will be provided to Pioneer USA. Send your entry to: *XLR8R*'s New Year Blitz Contest, 3180 18th St. #303, San Francisco, CA 94110 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "XLR8R's Holiday Gift Grab Contest" in the subject line.



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BJ "Bitter" Bastard's 2009 No-No's

The mistletoe was hung, the menorah was lit without burning the house down, and holiday nog had everyone singing old Whitney Houston songs with tears in their eyes. But over the holiday season, BJ "Bitter" Bastard also had many moments (and many long bowel movements) during which to contemplate the most annoying, mojo-detonating trends of 2008. With a limited-edition Mont Blanc-filled with blood from venomous bats, of course-Bitter Bastard penned this list of commandments of what to do and not to do in 2009.

1. Thou shalt not holler at your boy on my time.



What is up with cashiers being on their cellphones while they're trying to check you out? Tyrell, are you calling your lady on the Bluetooth headset to tell her I'm buying the generic Walgreens tampons? Damn son, text your boo on your break!

2. Thou shalt give me free wireless.



Damn you, unreliable stolen internet! You virtual grinchers should really share the airwaves with those of us too cheap to pay for wireless ourselves.

3. Thou shalt not wear scroggy cut-offs.



Cut-off jean shorts with slip-on Vans were the last few summers' sorry (but successful!) attempt at the Beavis and Butthead look. We can't help associate this look with people who "used to skate" and their sweaty nuts...

4. Thou shalt put science to good use.



Let me get this straight: You can make an HPV vaccine and Blu-Ray disc but you still haven't figured out how to make beer with zero calories? Pshaw. What do you *do* in those chem labs all day?

6. Thou shalt not become a techno cliché.



Hey, I like Kompakt too, but I don't look like a fucking bald albino space alien. How about you extract yourself from the message boards for five minutes and go get some sun? Talk to a girl in person?

7. Thou shalt not organize or attend any piss-poor festivals.



Are we getting old, or do festivals suck? All the ones that were good now just book boring-ass dance-rock bands-the kind we're not sure anyone actually *likes*-to try to sell more tickets. How much b.s., travel times, long lines, packed transit, and high ticket prices are you willing to put up with to go to a show?

8. Thou shalt not over-wizard.



We've already had enough of bands with spooky names, wizard themes, or crystal-something going on (either in their moniker, or crystals depicted on their covers) and the onslaught hasn't even started yet. Didn't you learn from everyone overdoing it on skulls and owls and wolves? Fuck you guys. My spirit animal is a dugong.

9. Thou shalt not dress like a spandex Skittles.



I get it-it's cheap basics. However, if more than 50% of your wardrobe is American Apparel, you need to branch out. Try, say... Uniqlo. Hell, take it back to The Gap. Everyone is starting to look like a day-glo modern dance student and it's hurting my eyes.

10. Thou shalt not make any more boring reality shows.



TV is getting so *meta*. Every time you turn it on, they've made a reality show out of another reality show, encrusted inside a third one. Don't even get me started on "extreme jobs" shows. You know, crab fishing, trucking, raising kids. Shit, books are starting to look real good again.

POINT & SHOOT



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Zomby

“Before, all my music was purple,” says Zomby, explaining the synesthesia he gets while working on music. “Now the tunes are going neon, like odd Gameboy 2-step shit. I feel a lot more inspired, like chrysalis stages, no joke,” he continues. “It’s like I stayed with purple ‘cause that’s what I knew, but now that my music is accepted I can go other ways.”

I’m interviewing the shadowy 28-year-old producer via Instant Messenger from his home in London, where—a bit like Edgar Allen Poe’s raven—he lives perched “on the top tier of Big Ben, flat six, sixth floor, right by the six on the clockface.” The details of his history are shady: a hardcore and jungle head since the age of 12 (“too young to get into raves but just old enough to buy records”), he grew up on a council estate, but has also lived in the South of France and Barcelona. In 2005, he fell in love with the stark sounds of Wiley’s Eski grime sound, and quit his job to make tracks. “I got Reason and a MacBook and cracked on,” he says. “I made ‘Spliff Dub’ by the end of that month and it was on.”

Zomby is reluctant to reveal his true identity, but he’s got his reasons. “I wanted to create a myth for Zomby artistically. I didn’t want it to be pinned to one person, but to be in the air of London as if it’s always been there.”

As it turns out, Zomby’s stats aren’t as important as his tunes, which carry so much emotion and weight they tell their own stories. The aforementioned “Spliff Dub” (check the massive Rustie remix), “The Lie,” and “Liquid Dancehall” are minimal, weeded dubstep cuts that curl around your brain like wisps of smoke. Haunting banger “Strange Fruit” traps your brain inside a deliciously endless loop that reminds of Nintendo’s *Castlevania*; a taster, no doubt, for his recent Hyperdub EP, where tracks like “Bubble Bobble” and “Aquafresh” bubble up from the 8-bit swamp like the mutated children of LFO and Count Chocula.

Mr. Zomby’s tried his hand (and succeeded) at multiple British bass genres, from his current obsession with ‘94 amen jungle to a more tropical, spookier take on fidget that he calls “horror house,” but it’s his Werk full-length, *Where Were You in ‘92?*, that shows where his heart’s really at. The album is an homage to early ‘90s U.K. hardcore outfits like Manix, Altern8, and many other one-hit wonders whose gritty breakbeats, chipmunked soul samples, and soaring Casio riffs have faded into the fabric of rave history. Using the classic Atari and Akai MPC-2000 set-up “to get the crunch in the tunes,” Zomby has crafted a concept album that’s at once totally new (check the Gucci Mane-sampling 8-bit B-more of “Pillz”) and achingly familiar—it’s almost hard to believe that tracks like “Euphoria” and “Tears in the Rain” *weren’t* actually made in ‘92.

“I love old-school,” he types, in between furiously sending me YouTube links to obscure rave records. “It’s my fave shit by far, musically, and this record was really the first time I’d allowed myself to really just make what I wanted. But nothing I would do is a remnant of old,” he’s quick to clarify. “Everything is in homage or directly forward.”

• Zomby’s *Where Were You in ‘92?* (Werk) and *Zomby EP* (Hyperdub) are out now. myspace.com/zombyproductions



For more from this interview, plus an exclusive Zomby mix, visit XLR8R.com/124extras.

An undead Londoner channels the ghost of breakbeat hardcore’s past, present, and future.

Somewhere **MOSCOW**

Synth bands with their eyes to the West rule the 21st-century Russian underground.



Clockwise from left: Manicure, Bajinda Behind the Enemy Lines, Punk TV

Some of the earliest visions many young Americans have of Moscow revolve around the pixelated image of St. Basil's Church in *Tetris*. From that limited perspective, it might seem strangely appropriate that the Russian capital experienced its own neon-tinged New Rave trend last year, complete with club nights like Idle Conversation and bright, angular fashion. Think "Theme A" for a new generation.

But Moscow's music scene has more depth and a much different history than simplistic stereotypes suggest. Like hipster masses around the world, Russian clubbers are keyed into international trends, as the increase in underground disco nights this year suggests. But there's also a hefty crop of bands playing hybrids of electronic music and rock—including some familiar post-punk and early-'90s Manchester sounds—at popular clubs like Ikra, Sixteen Tons, and Krisis Zhanra, which reopened a few years ago.

Any comparison has to take into account Moscow's comparatively underdeveloped musical infrastructure. During the '90s, the country's socialist past and

economic crash slowed the development of labels, studios, and clubs. The recent economic boom has led to a super-luxurious clubbing circuit, also trickled down to the indie scene.

"Three years ago, it was a desert—a complete desert. Now it's starting to show a little green," says Dima Ustimov, a promoter of nights like Idle Conversation and Thriller. "I'm feeling a bit more optimistic."

The AeroCCCP label—founded by Maxim Nazarov in 2005 and responsible for bringing surf-rock eccentrics Messer Chups to the U.S.—just released *The Future Sound of Russia*, a compilation of new St. Petersburg and Moscow bands and a worthwhile entry point for Westerners. Some of the most talked-about bands include post-punk group Manicure, which is about to release its first album; Bajinda Behind the Enemy Lines, from the Samara region; and veteran group Punk TV, whose members started playing atmospheric electronic rock together in the mid-'90s in the Siberian town of Novosibirsk (and have recently

relocated to Moscow).

Many influences are at play in new Soviet dance rock, and not all of them new. Popular touchstones include '90s Russian bands such as Spleen, Agata Kristi, and Kino, itself influenced by both the Russian bard singer-songwriter tradition and groups like The Cure and Joy Division. (They now have a cult following, in part due to the tragic death of lead singer Viktor Tsoi after a 1990 car crash in Riga.)

But American and European culture also plays a huge part. "Russia has always had this copycat approach to Western culture," says Nazarov. "I blame it on Communism. Imagine looking toward the West for culture for so many years because there wasn't anything in your country. Also, Russia is one of the biggest countries in terms of piracy. That increases the anarchy, which can be good for the creative side. I definitely think it's going to be big at one point. It will become American within a given number of years."

Patrick Sisson



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Vivian Girls

Catching a ride with Brooklyn's multitasking queens of garage rock.



It's a waterlogged November afternoon when I meet up with Cassie Ramone, Kickball Katy, and Ali Koehler of Vivian Girls at Atlas Café in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. We're safe from the rain in this den of glowing laptops and frothy cappuccinos, but the vibe is clearly wrong for an interview. It's far too quiet. Before we even sit down, everyone is already staring at us. "Want to just... do this in our car?" asks Katy.

Definitely.

Nestled among scattered jewel cases and pillows, it feels much more natural here in their tourmobile and occasional office, partly because Vivian Girls operate in a very DIY manner. Their self-titled 2007 album was restricted to just 500 self-released vinyl pressings before it found widespread love on the web and a reissue courtesy of L.A.-based garage-rock imprint In the Red. Now the group is creating their own label, Wild World, to peddle merch and limited-edition 7-inches. From recording to artwork

to silkscreening to mail ordering, the Girls handle everything themselves. "Basically the only thing we don't do ourselves is the [records'] mastering," explains Cassie.

It's a refreshingly old-fashioned way of doing business. "From day one we all worked really hard on Vivian Girls," says Cassie, who credits the band's widened exposure to its punk-rock work ethic. The other half of that equation, of course, is their excellent (and equally efficient) material, which consists of brief, melodic tracks that marry interplaying vocal harmonies ('60s acts like The Shangri-Las are a touchstone) with the crunch and skronk of *Nuggets*-era garage-isms. Despite these often-cited influences (shoegaze is another), Vivian Girls are loath to reduce their music to simple building blocks. "Everyone always says we sound like The Jesus and Mary Chain, and they're cool, but they're not an influence at all," says Cassie.

"I actually don't like shoegaze at all," echoes Ali

from the backseat.

While playing to packed houses on the success of their debut 22-minute *Vivian Girls* record, the girls' "number one priority" is their upcoming sophomore release, which is co-produced by the historic husband-and-wife rocker duo of Steve McDonald and Anna Waronker (of Redd Kross and That Dog fame, respectively). "Our band kind of sounds like a mixture [of those two bands], so we're really psyched about that," Katy mentions. As for the record's direction, the group lets on that the new album is a slight departure from their first. "I feel like it's definitely more intricate and the songs are a little spookier," says Ali. "They're a lot darker than the first album," Cassie reiterates.

The girls would love to chat more about the record, but time is short—they've got a bunch of t-shirts to silkscreen. We part ways, but not before Katy offers: "Do you need a ride anywhere?"

• Vivian Girls' self-titled debut is out now on In the Red. myspace.com/viviangirlsnyc

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Clothes Captioned

Evil Genius

Space-age prints, rainbow foil, and tie-dyed plaid satisfy your wild side.



As the name suggests, Evil Genius is not for the timid. With metallic foil graphics, bold prints of lips and bird skeletons, and colors ranging from neon red to the brightest turquoise, the seven-year-old brand channels Sunset Boulevard glam, Harajuku pop, and London sass with a sunny, sexy outlook that's pure Los Angeles. "I wanted a little bit more of a space-agey, Tokyo, rock 'n' roll vibe for the spring collections," explains designer Toni Young. "Raw edges and distressed elements mixed with touches of fluorescents and gradient prints." Young keeps her work environment similarly fun, luxurious, and laid-back, with a vintage Thierry Mugler rhinestone jacket on the back of her chair, a bottle of Dom Perignon on her desk (a gift from Three 6 Mafia), and Kaiju, her rescued terrier, at her feet. With Stones Throw oozing out of the stereo, we asked Young to tell us more about the tees, tunics, and eye-popping patterns she brings to life. *Tyra Bangs*

The Evil Genius store is located at 2117 Hillhurst Ave., Los Angeles. iheartevilgenius.com

Logo t-shirt (\$40)

This tee incorporates many of my favorite things: metallic foil, funky fonts, and gradients. My first attempt at a foil/ink gradient.



V-Neck cut-out tunic (\$48)

This fabric was an accident—it was supposed to be a burnout print but was printed on the wrong fabric and it burned holes all over it. Happy accident!



Double V tunic (\$60)

Continuing with the space-age influence, an all-over starry print on fluorescent yellow.



Tie-dye plaid hoodie (\$120)

This is super-limited edition for my flagship and online store only. I'll probably make about two dozen of these unisex hoodies—just enough for the people bold enough to wear them.



Starry Lips t-shirt (\$40)

I wanted this to look like an old-school heat transfer but didn't have the resources for the real thing, so I printed a layer of clear gel over the screenprint for a shiny, heat-transfer effect..

Snake Skull t-shirt (\$35)

Continuing with more of my obsessions: bones and rainbow foil..



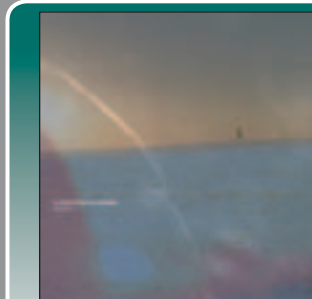
FM3
Buddha Machine II Soundbox

FM3 is back with an all-new version of the extraordinary soundbox praised by artists as diverse as Brian Eno, Monolake and Daft Punk. An interactive album with 9 new loops, 3 new colors and a new pitch bend feature, the *Buddha Machine 2.0* lets users customize the listening experience. "An extraordinary piece of sound art." —The Wire



STUDIO 1
Studio 1 CD

The legendary Studio 1 is Kompakt founder Wolfgang Voigt's (Gas, Mike Ink) most celebrated alias. Back by popular demand and more relevant than ever, this CD compiles the very best of the long out-of-print 12" series (plus 5 unreleased tracks) that defined the very meaning of German minimal techno.



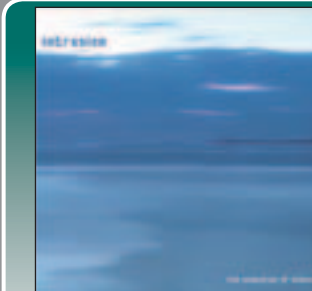
M. TEMPLETON & AA MUNSON
Acre Loss CD/DVD

Mark Templeton's fragile, electronically-modified acoustic recordings combine with experimental filmmaker Aaron Munson's Super 8 and 16mm films for a haunting, utterly mesmerizing audiovisual experience. "Templeton injects his compositions with a late night grace that's exceptionally beautiful and almost impossible to ignore." —Boomkat



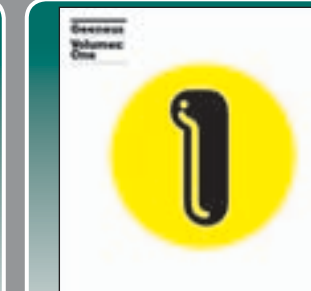
SVEN VÄTH *In The Mix: The Sound Of The Ninth Season 2CD*

Sven Vätth's mix is the definitive look back at the club music of 2008, featuring mesmerizing cuts from Timo Maas, Smith & Selway, Radio Slave, Sasha, Prins Thomas, Luke Solomon, Alex Flatner, Microworld, Johnny D, Dubfire and many more. "Cocoon and Sven never disappoint." —Almostcool



INTRUSION
The Seduction Of Silence CD

Following his acclaimed work with Rod Modell as Echospace, Stephen Hitchell's (Phase90, Soultek) new studio project injects drifting ambience, unbelievable low-end and sonic warmth into a more traditional roots vibe. Includes a guest appearance by Paul St. Hilaire. Absolutely stunning.



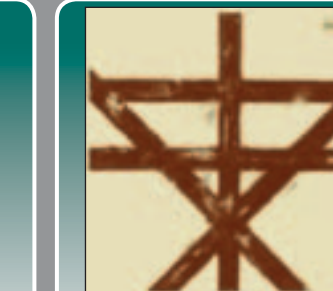
GEENEUS
Volumes: One 2CD/2X12"

Funky, the UK's freshest underground dance movement, gets a deluxe introduction with this brand new series from Rinse FM's highly-respected producer, Geeneus. Includes exclusive mixes and a bonus mix CD of in-demand tracks featuring Benga & Coki, Grand High Priest, Fingaprint, Roska, Katy B, Kentphonic and more.



WICKED WITCH
Chaos: 1978-86 CD/LP

First-time ever reissue of obscure '80s DC black punk psycho machine-funk. A musical cauldron of Funkadelic, Sun Ra, ESG, and Hendrix delivered direct from the heart of the Witch, remastered and with rare photos.



KTL
IV CD

From the ongoing duo of Stephen O'Malley (Sunn O))), Khanate) and Peter Rehberg (Pita) comes a demanding beast of blowtorch riffs and computer bass rattles, with punishing drumming from Atsuo (Boris). Produced by Jim O'Rourke, KTL take references from Swans, Wire and This Heat towards a stunning new direction.



B. FLEISCHMANN *Angst Is Not A Weltanschauung! CD/LP*

B. Fleischmann stakes out space for the singer/songwriter in the realm of post-techno/IDM with guest singers Daniel Johnston, Marilies Jagsch and Sweet William Van Ghost. "Fleischmann's music could readily be tagged 'indietronica'; combining a keen sense of songwriting with finely-wrought micro sound frameworks." —Boomkat



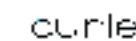
MADERA LIMPIA
La Corona CD

Guantánamo's Madera Limpia blend local acoustic traditions and globalized rhythms to transform a vibrant take on hip-hop and reggae/dancehall styles that are firmly grounded in a love for Cuban tradition. This is the sound of post-Buena Vista Cuba: fresh, urban, alive and kicking.



EFDEMIN *Carry On - Pretend We Are Not In The Room CD*

The debut mix CD from Phillip Sollmann's Efdemin project fuses old school influences with contemporary listening habits. Includes an exclusive track by the artist as well as respected producers such as Scott Grooves, Brothers' Vibe, Minilogue, Surgeon and Tobias.



CLP
Supercontinental CD

CLP (Funkstörung's Chris de Luca and Phon.o) forge their own definition of funk with an explosive mix of styles and personalities. Old school hip-hop, ghetto beats, early Miami-bass and crunk are thrown together with an international cast of hip-hop artists, including Yo Majesty, Kovas and Tunde Olaniran.



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On Tour RBMA Barcelona

Words **Vivian Host**
Photos **Lander Larrañaga**
Pere Masramon

Rhythm all-stars from all over form the backbone of the 10th annual **Red Bull Music Academy** in Barcelona, Spain.



For the 10th anniversary of the **Red Bull Music Academy—the futuristic schoolroom-meets-music incubator sponsored by everyone's favorite Austrian energy drink—the organizers pulled out all the stops.** They coaxed techno forefathers Moritz von Oswald

of Basic Channel and Wolfgang "Gas" Voigt out of their German caves. They imported reggae mainstays Sly & Robbie from Jamaica, and their musical descendents (drum & bass DJ Goldie, grime artist Skepta, dubstep dudes Mala and Appleblim) from England.

As in previous years, they invited 60 young musicians from around the world to revel in the inspiration and rock the house, all on Red Bull's dime. An impressive team of in-studio technicians—including Warp's Mark Pritchard, broken-beat man

Tony Nwachukwu, and DJ Zinc—were on hand to help, but most of these ingénues already knew their way around samplers, computer programs, and the almighty Technics 1200s. Read on for more scenes from Barcelona 2008. redbullmusicacademy.com



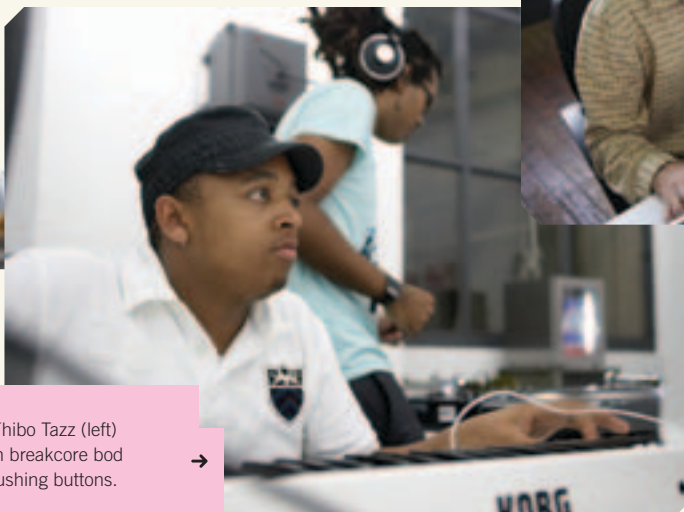
↑ Oakland's Nino Moschella, Paris' Onra, and NYC MC/producer Pursuit Grooves find the spot where hip-hop meets electro-funk in a studio plastered with porn.



↑ Mala of Digital Mystikz explains the mystique of dubplates, and the allure of their unique smell.



↑ Robbie Shakespeare, bass player of reggae dream team Sly & Robbie, muses on how many thousands of records the pair has played on.



→ South Africa's Thibo Tazz (left) and Venezuelan breakcore bod Cardopusher pushing buttons.



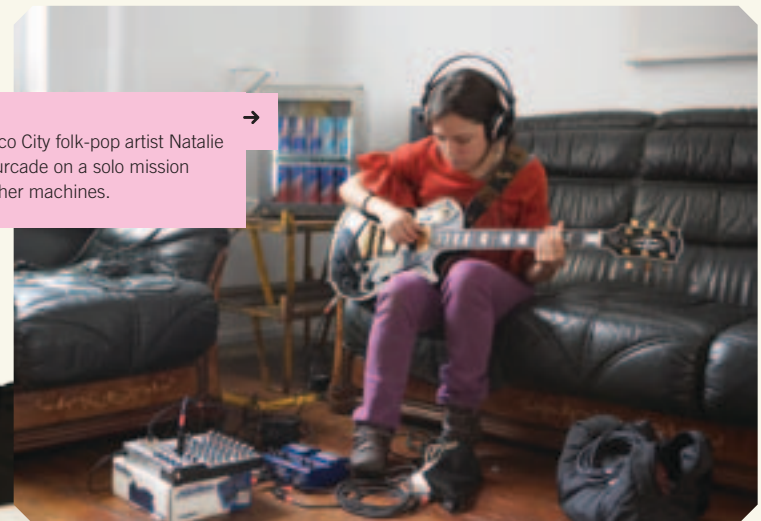
↑ Techno producer and mastering engineer Cristian Vogel, who now lives in Barcelona, puzzles over a piece of programming with Perth hip-hop true-schooler Ta-Ku.



→ Southern rap legend Bun B gives an inspirational lecture.



→ A cross-continental jam session with Australia's Dizz1 on drums, NGel from Dominican Republic on bass, and Sweden's Cornelia managing the maracas.



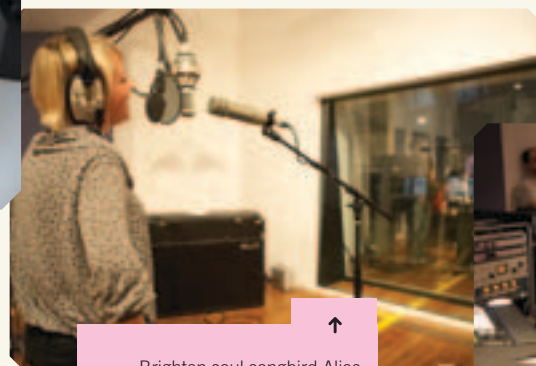
→ Mexico City folk-pop artist Natalie Lafourcade on a solo mission with her machines.



← London dubstepper Subeena plays at Arc de Bass.



→ Participants explored the intuitive Reactable music device, which LFO's Mark Bell used on Björk's last tour.



↑ Brighton soul songbird Alice Russell lays down vocals.



← In-house studio engineer Russ "The Dragon" Elevado (D'Angelo, Alicia Keys) breaks down the basics of analog recording for Academy participants.

XLR8R celebrates Red Bull's 10th anniversary with a special video at XLR8R.com/124extras.

Elements

Back in Black

2009's best accessories arrive from the darkside.

Compiled by Tyra Bangs



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12. Tarina Tarantino Queen Alice bow clip (\$75) tarinatarantino.com

Words Ali Gitlow
Photo Alex Solmsen

Don Rimini

A Parisian electro maven's dancefloor stormers recall the dog days of rave.



The rave myth, defined by scores of youngsters spending hours calling hotlines and following maps to finally reach blissed-out dancefloor paradise, was alive and well in 1990s Paris. "There were raves in warehouses, but also in caves, in woods, on rooftops, in villas, in middle-age castles, empty swimming pools, old military barracks," says producer and DJ Don Rimini (a.k.a. Xavier Gassemann). He spent his salad days at these parties, listening to English breakbeat, Chicago house, and Detroit techno tunes from the likes of Green Velvet, Underground Resistance, and Plastikman.

As a result, the gritty electro tracks on the 32-year-old's recently released *Kick N' Run* EP (put out by Delicious Gutter, Aaron Lcrate's and Rick Ross' new imprint) ooze lazer-happy, stomach-churning

synths and four-to-the-floor rhythms evocative of rave's heyday. "Nervous Breakdown" features slinky sirens and pounding beats, while "Ohow?" and "Rave On" 's frenetic kicks and looped vocals exude old-school U.K. rave style. While many producers choose to showcase only two original tracks on their EPs, Rimini crafted his as a mini-album. "I didn't want to use a second-rate track for a b-side; only first choice—four tracks, four bangers," he explains.

January 2008's *Absolutely Rad* EP initially put Rimini on the map, due to the success of the massive tune "Let Me Back Up" and its attendant Crookers rework. The Delicious Gutter dudes took notice, asking Rimini to remix an old Delicious Vinyl track of his choosing for their *RmXXXology* compilation—a perfect fit, since he was a hip-hop DJ for a time. He

decided to give Young MC's "Bust a Move" the rave treatment, fusing epic synths with thumping beats while preserving the spirit of the original. "I was just a super fan of Delicious Vinyl. It's really a mythic label for me; my own mini American dream," he says of the experience.

Rimini has been busy crafting other remixes, putting a new spin on Sinden's "Hardcore Girls" (featuring B-more club chanteuse Rye Rye), as well as tracks by Dada Life, Nu Ravers on the Block, Fires of Rome, and Numero. However, his ultimate remix fantasy is to have a go at late '80s Dutch dance duo Quadrophenia's "Quadrophenia." "The original is wicked!" he exclaims jovially. "It's got an amazing hook for ringtones!"

• Don Rimini's *Kick N' Run* EP is out now on Delicious Gutter. myspace.com/donrimini


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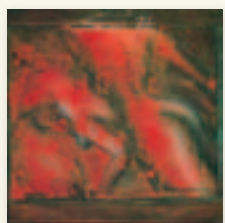
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Five Star Murderbot

Kansas City bass fiend and blogger Murderbot discusses the dark, sexy, and cheesy essentials of the late '80s electronic body music known as Belgian New Beat.



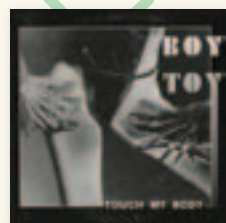
Snowy Red "Euroshima-Wardance" (Antler, 1988)

This tune came out on Antler (later to become Antler-Subway), one of several labels co-owned by Lords of Acid founder Maurice Engelen (a.k.a. Praga Khan). It's a dark slow-burner of the late '80s "Cold War nuclear tension as a metaphor for dancefloor sexual tension" school of songwriting. The lyrics aren't particularly meaningful (or even coherent), but considering that New Beat was basically a merger of Industrial and Italo-disco, you really shouldn't be expecting poetry.



TNT Clan "Blow Up the DJ" (Subway, 1988)

TNT Clan is actually New Beat super-producers Morton, Sherman, and Belluci (two of the guys from EBM group Poésie Noire and the other co-owner of Antler-Subway). "Blow Up the DJ" is essentially happy hardcore at 110 bpm. It's got a lot of the Coldcut/MARRS-style samples that were ubiquitous in 1988, a chipmunked sample of Kiss, and Jade 4 U delivering one of the worst raps in history. It is embarrassingly cutesy, relentlessly chipper, and one of my all-time faves.



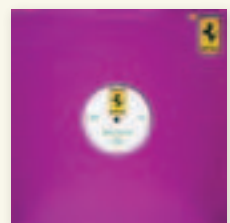
Boy Toy "Touch My Body" (Kaos Dance, 1989)

Lords of Acid are like William Shatner: Once upon a time they were stupid, over-the-top, and delightful. Eventually they realized what everybody was laughing at and became this strained, self-aware meta-joke that, frankly, is difficult to watch. Boy Toy was a Lords of Acid side-project from the peak of their career; *T.J. Hooker*-era LoA, if you will. "Touch My Body" is a grimy acid tune with characteristic Lords lyrics: simple, repetitive, sex-obsessed. Slutty dungeon music at its best.



The Weathermen "Bang!" (Play It Again Sam, 1989)

The Weathermen are Jean-Marc Lederman (Belgian synth nerd who played with Fad Gadget and Gene Loves Jezebel) and Bruce Geduldig (American, formerly of Tuxedomoon). "Bang!" their second big single, is a cheery party anthem about hating your job and getting drunk to forget about it. It's got some great through-the-looking-glass reflections on American culture from hardcore culture junkies, plus it referenced Telex about 16 years before "Losing My Edge" made you internet indie hipsters think of doing it.



HNO3 "Doughnut Dollies" (R&S, 1988)

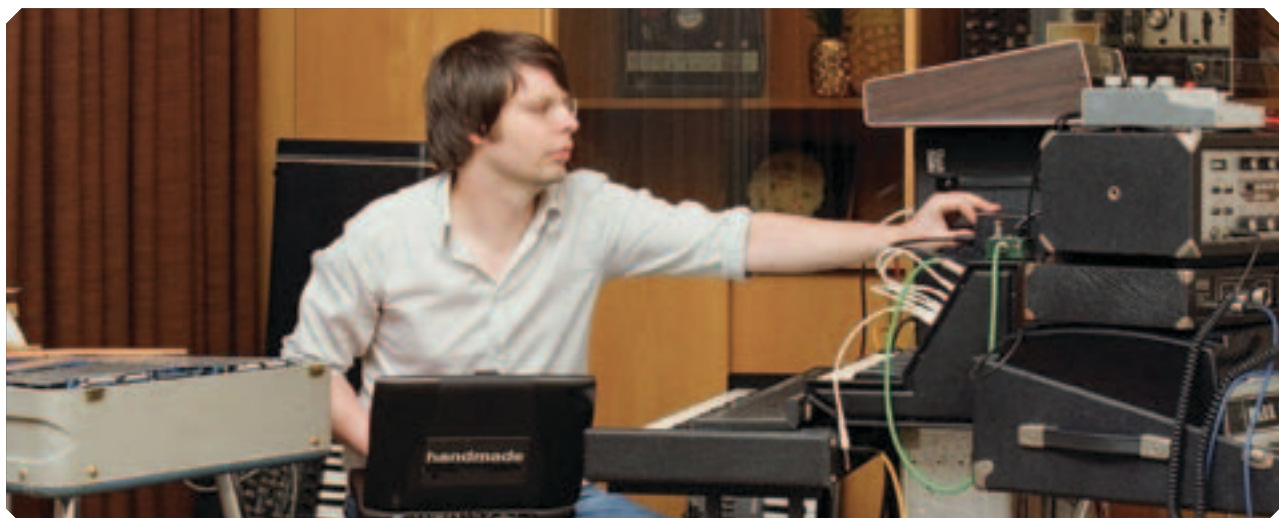
This was an early release on rave super-label R&S, back when it was just known as Ferrari (hence the horse logo). It's by Eric Beysens, one of the DJs from Boccaccio (the Studio 54 of New Beat). The slow tempo of New Beat can be daunting, but "Doughnut Dollies" uses the pace to its advantage, harnessing that extra smidgen of space between the drums to heighten the percussive elements, creating a kind of void between the beats for a dancer to fall into. Kind of like a K-hole. Or dubstep.

chrissymurderbot.com



Spin Cycle

↓↓↓↓↓↓
 ↓↓↓↓↓↓ Jan Jelinek



Spray it don't say it: Picturebox recently released *Overspray*, a survey of 1970s airbrush art from Los Angeles. Check overspraybook.com.

Experimental noise rock outfit **The Jesus Lizard** is reuniting for live gigs from May through November of this year. Touch & Go will re-release four of their classic albums, remastered with the help of original engineer **Steve Albini**.

Shitkatapult celebrates number 100 in its catalog with an ambient electronic compilation featuring tracks from **Anders Ijar**, **Jan Jelinek**, and **The Orb**.

From the "What the fuck?!" file: Denny's has a new late-night menu that includes items created by **Katy Perry**, **Taking Back Sunday**, and **Hoobastank**, whose "Hooburrrito" will

have you asking "Who ba-stanked the Denny's bathroom?"

Digging For Dirt, Jamie Lowe's biography of deceased Wu-Tang rapper **Ol' Dirty Bastard**, is out now from Faber & Faber.

Spectral's **Kate Simko** has scored a feature-length film, *The Atom Smashers*, about the search for a

subatomic particle called the Higgs boson. Check pbs.org for more info.

In November, Flint, Michigan-born rapper **MC Breed**, best known for his 1991 hit "Ain't No Future in Yo' Frontin," died of kidney failure. He was 37.

Jason "Donna Summer" Forrest has a new record label, Nightshifters,

What's Good...

Expect new records this spring from **Mavado** (VP), **The Juan Maclean** (DFA), **Depeche Mode** (Mute), **The Drones** (ATP), **Mos Def** (Downtown), and **The Prodigy**, who will release *Invaders Must Die* on their own Take Me to the Hospital imprint.

with New York **DJ Jubilee**. Check nightshfterslabel.com.

This month, Universal Pictures began filming a French-language biopic of '60s singer/songwriter **Serge Gainsbourg** in Paris; model **Laetitia Casta** will play Brigitte Bardot.

In December, Australian record label **Modular** celebrated their 10th anniversary with Nevereverland, a four-date concert tour featuring **Klaxons**, **Hercules & Love Affair**, **Ladyhawke**, and more.

This spring, prolific hip-hop MC and MySpace phenom **Jay Electronica** will release a coffee-table book, his first album, and *Nomad's Land*, a feature film shot in India with **Erykah Badu**.

French house stormer **Para One** is working on a new project with Massachusetts' eclectic disco-soul vocalist **San Serac** called Slice & Soda.

Videogame developer **2K Sports** now has its own **Air Jordan** shoe. Only 50 of the red-white-and-black CP3 model were produced, and

they come with copies of *NBA 2K8* and *2K9*, a shirt by street artist ISO50, and an Xbox 360 faceplate.

In April, Get Physical will release **Damian Lazarus'** first artist album, a chilled-out electronic affair that features the techno DJ singing alongside a pair of 17-year-old Swedish twins. Lazarus is also working on remixes with [a\]pendics.shuffle](http://a]pendics.shuffle).

L.A. rockers **No Age** have filmed a skate movie and curated a series of artist t-shirts (by **Matthew Thurber**, **Sam McPheeters**, and **Hisham Bharoocha**) for skater Andrew Reynolds' **Altamont** clothing line.

R&B crooner and equine enthusiast **Ginuwine** reunites with producer **Timbaland** for his sixth album, due out in spring.

Take to the seas! Nautical looks take over streetwear this spring, with **3sixteen**, **Peg Leg**, **King Stampede**, and **Trovata** delivering navy sailing jackets and boating flag graphics.



Female

Mixtape by savage torch singer Antony Hegarty

1. **Christian Death** "Stairs—Uncertain Journey"
"Lucifer perish/I recall sin." My teens, dans une nutshell.

2. **Nina Simone** "Damballa"
"You slavers will know what it's like to be a slave/ You won't go to heaven, you won't go to hell/You'll remain in your graves with the stench and the smell." It's called Moral Authority.

3. **Terry Callier** "The Golden Apples of the Sun"
 Devendra sent this immaculate song to me once.

4. **CocoRosie** "God Has a Voice, She Speaks Through Me"
 In the future female, Jesus is a girl.

5. **Kate Bush** "The Kick Inside"
 Like a secret garden inside my heart.

6. **Donny Hathaway** "Young, Gifted and Black" (Live)
 Teaching.

7. **Liz Fraser** "Half Gifts" (acoustic version from *Twilights EP*)
 At the end of the last Cocteau Twins song, Liz Fraser starts a hope revolution in pop music.

8. **Marc and The Mambas** "Caroline Says"
 A song that gave birth to me.

9. **Nomi** "What I'm Worth"
 Why can't I stop crying? Listen to the future.

10. **OMD** "Souvenir"
 Break a computer's heart.

Antony and The Johnsons' *The Crying Light* is out on January 20 on Secretly Canadian.
antonyandthejohnsons.com

Fright Night: A guide to dance music's undead



Zombi

Ambient horror and proggy proto-disco from a Pittsburgh, PA duo. Heavy on the Jean-Michel Jarre, Rush, and Argento influences; heavy like a Cheech Wizard blacklight poster.

zombi.us



Zomby

Gameboy grime, dark dubstep, and old-skool rave madness from a mysterious London lad who loves weed, Hedi Slimane, and cooking chicken.

myspace.com/zombyproductions



Zombie Zombie

More Italian horror fetishism, this time from Parisians Etienne Jaumet and CosmicNeman, who make dark and minimal analog disco with Theremin, live drums, and Silver Apples-style tape delay.

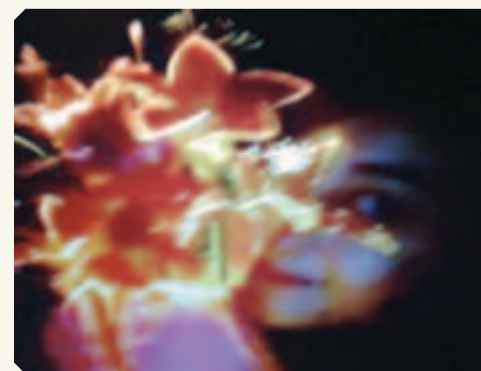
myspace.com/therealzombiezombie



Zombie Nation

Munich native Florian Senfter creates pounding electro anthems and squiggly dark synth numbers. He's half of ZZT (with Tiga), but is best known for "Kernkraft 400," a staple at European sports games and bad clubs everywhere.

zombination.com



;D Phone Pix! From Pop Levi

A still from an iChat film called *Cookie* that I'm making starring avant-garde clarinetist, sex artist, and model **Childrabbitt**. In this scene, she dances naked around an electric bouquet of flowers whilst invoking her demon sister.

Pop Levi's *Never Never Love (Counter)* is out now. poplevi.com

MÄSTER



PARIS' PERENNIALY MISUNDERSTOOD MR. OIZO ON UNDERGROUND FILM, ONE-HIT
WONDERS, AND WHY CHEESY SAXOPHONES AREN'T AS FUNNY AS YOU THINK

PUPPETS

WORDS BRANDON IVERS PHOTOS MATHEW SCOTT

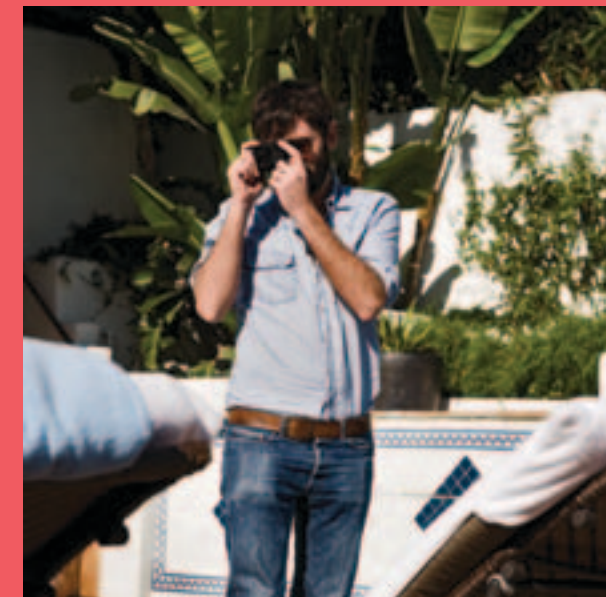




" I THINK THE IMPORTANT THING IS MY SPIRIT,

THAT'S WHERE I'M GETTING THE GOOD STUFF.

IT'S NOT FROM SKILL."



The problem with humor these days is that you're always supposed to *get* it. What's worse: If you're smart enough, even if you don't get it, you can make up elaborate reasons for why you do. You can describe a video of a German guy repeatedly plunging his head in a bucket of water as being "surreal," "absurd," or "ironic." But most of the time, that's just a candy-assed way of saying *I have no idea what the fuck that means.*

And then there's guys like French producer Quentin Dupieux (a.k.a. Mr. Oizo, pronounced *WAH-zoh*, like the French word for "bird"), who scramble the difference between jokes you get and jokes you don't get into something much more... surreal. A filmmaker and musician, Dupieux's humor can be escapist, subversive, and potentially pointless all at the same time. Not that his third album, *Lambs Anger*, is anything close to an academic exercise, although even cheesy, fake saxophones and gratuitous Hooverers are subversive when you think about how uptight and rule-driven dance music producers can be...

FLAT ERIC'S TRIP

Quentin Dupieux has at least one solid reason for being a complex, difficult character: He's a one-hit wonder with a body of work that far surpasses his one hit. If VH-1 ever ends up doing a "Where Are They Now: '90s Rave" segment, they'd be remiss not to mention Dupieux's first hit as Mr. Oizo, 1999's "Flat Beat." As dance music classics go, it's a big one: a milestone for the squelchy, farty bassline, and bedroom-produced minimalist charm. Aside from being a good track (and one that holds up nearly 10 years later), "Flat Beat" was also an award-winning commercial—one that Dupieux also wrote, directed, and puppeteered.

Dupieux's commercial, which advertised Levi's Sta-Prest jeans, was memorable for a yellow sock puppet named Flat Eric*, whose main shtick was personifying the squelches and wobbles of a Korg MS-20 synthesizer. He also happened to be incredibly cute.

"Right after 'Flat Beat' was the most confusing time for me," recalls Dupieux via phone from his Paris studio. "It was only my first step in electronic music, and it went way too big. So I had a lot of pressure after it, which is why I did *Analog Worms Attack*—I was angry, in a way. I wanted to prove to everybody that I was not just the guy that did this commercial with a stupid soundtrack."

Dupieux locked himself in the studio for two straight months, working constantly on what became his first full-length album. Released on Laurent Garnier's F-Communications label in 1999, *Analog Worms Attack*'s overtly gritty production was the odd link between French house and

a parallel-world, wonky version of instrumental hip-hop. It may not have had the worldwide success that "Flat Beat" did, but *Analog Worms* still ended up being wildly influential.

"'Flat Beat' took two hours in an afternoon—it wasn't an important moment," admits Dupieux. "So I tried to create and it was unconscious I think, but I tried to create an important moment [with *Analog Worms*]. I was totally obsessed with the record, totally focused. And I gave too much of myself. When I was finished, it was hard to find energy or even new ideas. So I did nothing."

During Dupieux's period of musical inactivity, he decided to refocus on his filmmaking persona. One of the results, 2001's *Nonfilm*, bore all the hallmarks of shell-shocked creativity: Its non-plot was perhaps the very definition of a joke you're *not* supposed to get.

THE ANDALUSIAN DOG

"I have a weird approach to Quentin's film side," says Ed Banger label boss, Pedro Winter. "I didn't like his first film, *Nonfilm*, but I want to watch it again—only assholes don't change their mind. That movie was maybe too free for a young guy like me who likes organized stuff."

The central idea of *Nonfilm*, which revolves around an actor accidentally shooting and killing a film's tech crew (and then opting to continue filming the movie without a camera or script), is similar in execution to Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's infamous 1928 film, *Un Chien Andalou*. Noted to be the first low-budget short film, *Andalou* gave birth to Buñuel's oft-cited concept that "no idea or image that might lend itself to a rational explanation of any kind would be accepted." At the very least, it's an aesthetic that Dupieux continues to share—the cover of *Lambs Anger* playfully recreates the infamous eyeball-razor scene from *Un Chien Andalou*.

"I realized that when you're creating stuff, you're always being influenced," says Dupieux. "You cannot help it—you have to be influenced, even from some stuff that you don't like. So I decided to choose the [influences] instead of being passive. And that's why I might make some references, so I can distort them and change them."



*Flat Eric was based on an earlier puppet design of Dupieux's called "Stephane," who appears in the video for Mr. Oizo's "M-SEQ." It is, coincidentally, this video that landed Dupieux the gig with Levi's.



" I ' M N O T B U L L S H I T T I N G T H E A U D I E N C E . W H E N I D O N ' T F E E L L I K E D O I N G M U S I C , I ' M N O T D O I N G I T J U S T T O P U T O U T A R E C O R D . "

Six years later, Dupieux followed *Nonfilm* with 2007's *Steak*, a slightly more straightforward movie about the newest teen rage: extreme facelifts. Featuring acting and musical cameos from Ed Banger labelmates SebastiAn and Sébastien Tellier (the latter of which also appeared in *Nonfilm*), *Steak* has a soundtrack that's easier to find than the movie itself.

"You can't find *Steak*," says Dupieux. "The producer doesn't care about the movie anymore—he was just interested in the French release. I'm the only one that has a subtitled version. So unless I do a hit movie one day, they will not put it out in the States or anywhere else. It's hard—the movie is too strange, and I'm not known as a director away from home. But I'm quite confident that one day it will be available everywhere."

HE'S ANGRY

Of course, Dupieux never completely ditched music over the course of his cinematic pursuits. In fact, he followed up *Analog Worms* with an even more bizarre album: 2005's *Moustache (Half a Scissor)*. Employing a hyper-compressed technoid production style that sometimes borders on unlistenable, the album was a fuck-off to F-Comm's puritanical tendencies. (It's worth noting that Dupieux brings a fuck-off attitude to more than just his productions, and has been caught flipping the bird at clubgoers during his DJ sets.) Rather than embrace the label's safe vision of funk, soul, and hip-hop, Dupieux opted for a sort of nightmarish electro vibe that had more in common with crunk's artificial clatter.

"I don't think it was a very good period for a bit there," says Dupieux. "To me, the good period started when I did 'Ready to Uff' for Uffie. That was the next step I was waiting for—working with vocals in a different way, using the computer differently. It was the beginning of something new for me, and I still feel like I'm in that period."

Dupieux's new Oizo output on Ed Banger is, in many ways, a happy meeting between the pop aspects of "Flat Beat" and the radically bizarre material of *Moustache*. Ditching his analog gear set-up in favor of a Macintosh G5, his tracks on *Lambs Anger*, notably the arpeggiated house freak-out "Z," are cleaner and more defined than before, not so much leaning on distortion in the literal sense, but rather taking the idea and applying it as a concept. Like on the disco cut-up "Jo," which, despite being Dupieux's poppiest production, still has a maladjusted awkwardness, the groove punctuated by out-of-place clicks and overstated schmaltz. Or "Positif," which features cut-up robo-vocals that say "you are animals" and "you are sheep," both insults apparently directed at the audience (perhaps a reference to the title?). Yet it's not clear

in either line who is actually the speaker—the computer or Dupieux.

"I'm not trying to have my own little secrets," offers Dupieux, when quizzed on his production. "For example, 'Z' was totally made with factory sounds that come with Logic. I was discovering every preset. And I tried to use sounds that you'd never use for electronic music... like the shit saxophone or the shit piano or the shit flute, which is good because they are good instruments. The sound itself is good, not to mention it's very funny to play with them. And they aren't electronic at all—they're samples from real life."

BIRDHOUSE IN YOUR SOUL

It might be strange to think of a corny, sampled saxophone as subversive, but bending connotations is one of Dupieux's greatest strengths. His humor, which seems to pervade everything he does, is more dark comedy than wacky pratfall—not always funny *ha-ha*, but certainly nodding towards some strange truth, however personal it may be.

"For a long time, I was trying to be someone different than myself," says Dupieux. "But now, I think I totally accept who I am—good traits and problems. I'm not trying to do things that I cannot do. And I know I'm very pretentious about who I am. I've been doing what I've been doing since I was 15, and I think I'm getting better and better. I'm not bullshitting the audience. When I don't feel like doing music, I'm not doing it just to put out a record."

And whether or not people regard tracks like "Bruce Willis Is Dead" as being anything more than nonsense is beside the point. It's the intention that counts—the fact that supposedly stupid dance music can be still be expressive and pretentious and maybe even have a tortured soul without being drained of fun and all the things that make you want to dance to it.

"The important thing is always to have the right spirit," says Dupieux. "I don't think that I'm a good musician; I'm not really talented with music. I don't even know how to play the keyboard. I'm just searching—like a kid! But I think the important thing is my spirit, that's where I'm getting the good stuff. It's not from skill."

Mr. Oizo's *Lambs Anger* is out now on Ed Banger. myspace.com/oizo3000

THE TOUGHEST CUT Sebastien Tellier on Dupieux's cinematic anomaly, *Steak*.

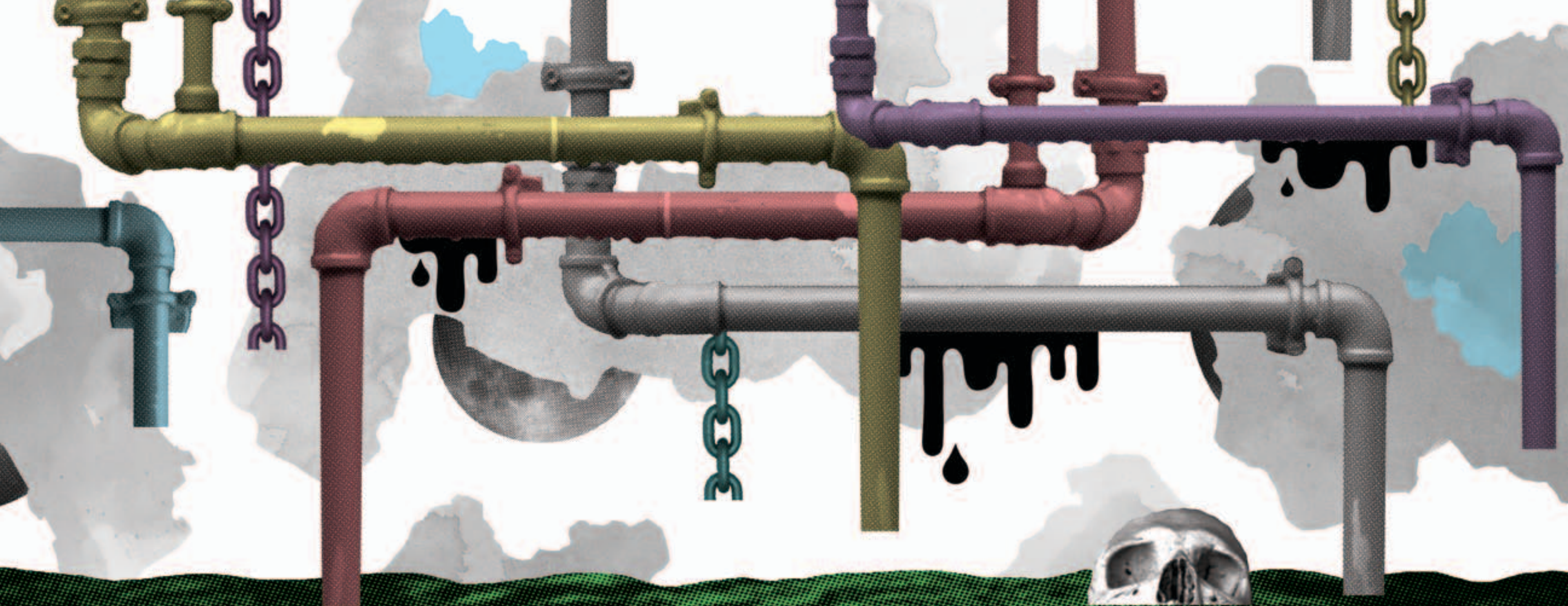
Even in France, Quentin Dupieux's second film, *Steak*, is considered a bizarre failure. Loosely based around a psychiatric patient named Blaise and his quest for acceptance with the Chivers, a gang of red jacket-wearing, post-facelift milk drinkers, the story is said to be just as incomprehensible with or without the aid of understanding French. However, Francophiles and Ed Banger completists may still appreciate *Steak* for the cameos from Sebastien Tellier, Kavinsky, and SebastiAn, who show up in roles like

wheelchair-bound car thieves (of course!).

"Quentin works hard to make his life simple and easy," says Tellier. "Therefore he likes to invent problems in his creations, and gets pleasure from those invented situations. [Like on] *Nonfilm*, he would write the day's scene in a pickup truck during breakfast, so every day would be a surprise. I guess similar people should be able to understand [Dupieux's] movies, but there are few of those people in the world."

Tellier recently appeared on the French

talk show *On N'est Pas Couché* (translation: "we're not asleep yet") and was taken to task for his involvement in *Steak*, which host Laurent Ruquier referred to as "shit." But Tellier held his ground, explaining (roughly translated), "*Steak* was not shit; it just wasn't a mainstream kind of humor. It doesn't make any sense—it's absurd. It's anything... There were no references to buying or selling or this or that, which I liked."



WORDS RAJI SOHAL ILLUSTRATIONS COLIN STRANDBERG

crunk to the future

CALL IT LAZER BASS, FUTURE BLAP, TURBO CRUNK, OR "PIKACHU'S CUNT," BUT BEWARE OF A NEW ELECTRONIC HIP-HOP HYBRID ABOUT TO DETONATE A DANCEFLOOR NEAR YOU.

It's summer 2007, and it's a hot day in Montreal. Typical of the season, impromptu street parties are afoot. And, as everyone in this laid-back town can attest, there's no better accompaniment to sunshine and sidewalk boozing than beats. Buzz is growing around a "secret" outdoor show, and by nightfall almost 1000 sweaty folks have gathered on the derelict grounds below an overpass on the border of Montreal's young artist haven, Mile End.

A small sea of tight jeans, fedoras, and neon prints plastered to caps and hoodies has amassed, ready to witness the heavy bass of Megasoid, a duo comprised of producers Rob Squire (formerly known as Sixtoo and now known as Speakerbruiser) and Hadji Bakara (of indie rockers Wolf Parade). The pair precariously balances a pile of analog and digital gear on the roof of a clunky minivan parked under the overpass, flanked by large speakers poised to drop serious bass into the thick humidity of Montreal's summer air.

And drop it does. When the pair's tweaked-out lazer sounds and distorted bass transform the already-perfect "Get Ur Freak On" (by Missy Elliott) and "Made You Look" (by Nas), people dance like it's the Apocalypse—their last chance to party with total abandon.

BASS HERE NOW

In the year and half since, Megasoid's "under the bridge" show has become legend in the Montreal music scene. Squire and Bakara were on to something contagious and subterranean, something that was about to erupt. Mainstream hip-hop had become stale, unimaginative, and predictable in its arrangement. Club techno was returning to its "ravey" side, taking a hard right turn from Montreal's traditionally minimal aesthetic. And while the phenomenon of melding the two kinds of music was nothing new—everyone from Jeff Mills to Diplo has mixed hip-hop and techno together—DJing and remixing these somewhat divergent sounds had become altered irrevocably with the possibilities of new technology.

Beyond just using software like Ableton Live to remix tracks, a new crop of artists had begun fusing hip-hop's and dancehall's lyrical fire and insistent boom-bap with techno's heavy kicks, glitchy noise, and 8-bit synths. They threw in some mad, inhuman time signatures and birthed quite a post-modern mélange of sound, culture, and technology—a sound that *New Yorker* music critic Sasha Frere-Jones dubbed "lazer bass" in his scene-surveying article last March.

THE FRENCH (CANADIAN) TOUCH

The scene is still in its infancy, explains French-Canadian DJ and producer Ghislain Poirier. "It blew up last year,"

he offers, but with the caveat that "there's not enough thought behind it for it to last long. We're all just into a similar sound right now. It's a vague association of producers in just [a few] cities, and now it's come to light."

In Poirier's native Montreal, the scene coalesces around two parties: his own Bounce Le Gros and Megasoid's monthly Turbo Crunk party. The names themselves—"fat bounce" and aggressive techno-rap on overdrive—have proven to be good descriptors of the DJ/producers' sound, which involves tweaking popular hip-hop acapellas over experimental, off-kilter hip-hop-speed beats, and sometimes augmenting them with rappers and dancehall MCs. Megasoid is the backbone of the Montreal scene, often performing with collaborators in the Turbo Crunk posse, including rising lazer-basser Lunice, whose music has morphed from sample-based, Dilla- and bossa nova-inspired stuff into minimalist hyphy. "Megasoid makes the marriage of Detroit techno and hip-hop impossibly entertaining," Squire explains. "We're more and more concerned with heavy bass."

Poirier, who has a background in leftfield beats (he released on Toronto label Intr_Version and Chocolate Industries before linking up with Ninja Tune for his latest album, *No Ground Under*), has also been central to the formation of the bass scene. His Bounce Le Gros night at Montreal club Zoobizarre mashes together all manner of dancehall, reggae, and hip-hop, and draws an entirely diverse crowd to a low-ceilinged cave of a joint that, as Poirier says, "you can pack full of sweaty people ready to party without much notice."

GREAT SCOTS

As Poirier notes, the future-synth bass explosion is not just a Montreal thang. Across the ocean, Glasgow, Scotland is another rumbling hotbed, nurtured by a crew of a dozen or so known as LuckyMe, which includes producers Rustie (who also record for Hyperdub, Stuff, and Warp), Dom Sum, and Hudson Mohawke and Mike Slott of Heralds of Change, who hail from Dublin. The crew throws a bangin' monthly called The Baller\$ 5ocial Club at Glasgow School of Art, broadcasts a radio show on samurai.fm, and designs its own brand of streetwear





called Oddities on top of performing near and far. LuckyMe has its own record label, too; its first release was Hudson Mohawke's leftfield beat cruncher EP, *Ooops*, a psychedelic take on hip-hop and grime whose only downfall is being perennially "out of stock."

While much of this sound revolves around tricky synths and throbbing, wobbling bass, these guys still don't sound alike. Rustie veers toward off-kilter, perverse, and dark joints like videogame dubstep number "Inside Pickachu's Cunt" and the fragmented electronic hip-hop of 2007's groundbreaking "Jagz the Smack." Mike Slott leans toward more beautiful, Dilla-inspired boom-bap-crunch and '80s synths, as on "Amanallah" and his recent collabos with New York vocalist Muhsinah.

It looks as though LuckyMe has a bright future in front of them, but they're not ones to speak too soon. After a recent set at the Pop Montreal festival, Rustie echoed Poirier's sentiments about the tenuousness of the young scene: "This is what it's like right now... but it could be totally different tomorrow," he confided.

ALL POINTS WEST

It's probably worth noting that each of the four central cities in the sprawling international bass scene has a decided laid-back, liberal bent. The two U.S. centers of the sound, L.A. and San Francisco, epitomize that vibe, and maybe even take it a step further, with an *m.o.* that's a bit more focused on individual artists than posses.

Maybe because of that individualistic spirit, it's even more difficult to nail down the West Coast's sound: Everything from drum & bass to glitch to hyphy beats is represented. Lazer Sword (whose members Bryant Rutledge and Antaeus Roy are former *XL&R* employees) carries the torch for San Francisco; their (mostly) instrumental synth-hop sound, keenly prefigured by their name, is in full effect on the outta-control *Blap to the Future* mixtape—18 remixes and edits with acapellas ripped from Busta Rhymes and Lil Wayne. (Manybrain.blogspot.com, a shared blog maintained by a number of the folks mentioned in this article, claims that the production on *Blap* is so thick that it "raised the bar" for mixes to follow.)

A rag-tag collective of artists has also sprouted up around Los Angeles' Low End Theory party, the internet radio station dublab, and the Plug Research and Alpha Pup labels, who are best know for their successes in IDM and abstract hip-hop. Low End Theory, thrown by L.A. underground godfather and Alpha Pup label head Daddy Kev, has hosted everyone mentioned above as well as frequent sets from L.A.-based Edward "edIT" Ma and his crew, The Glitch Mob, who have an LP of their hyper-and-happy glitch breaks due out this year. And on the headier and jazzier side of the equation is Flying Lotus (a.k.a. Steven Ellison), whose abstract compositions are described by peers as being sexy and psychedelic at the same time (and whose Brainfeeder label is coming on strong as the next contender for the broken-bass roster of choice).

COME TOGETHER

The collaborative spirit is high: everyone remixes each other's tracks, and makes tour stops at both Zoobizarre and Low End Theory. But it took a while for the connections to materialize. By phone from his studio, L.A. producer Jason Chung (a.k.a. Nosaj Thing) admits that he was surprised when Montreal's Turbo Crunk crew invited him to play at their monthly last year, because, as Chung sees it, his music isn't club music. "I wasn't used to playing music that people dance to!" he exclaims. "I didn't expect the

crazy response to it but it really inspired me and so I've created a set for [dancier venues]."

So what's the common ground between Chung's sonic ideas on the West Coast and those erupting in a French-Canadian city he'd never visited before? It's more than just a similar love for fusing hip-hop and abstract electronics—it's *how* they interrelate the low-end, the slowed-down tempo, and the inventive synth sounds. And technology has everything to do with it.

"The common sound comes from us all sharing similar ideas because we have the same tools and similar vision. We embrace technology. The hardware and software provide the inspiration, but how each artist uses the tools makes it interesting," says Chung. "We share ideas on MySpace and by chatting online all the time. We're helping each other move forward, like, 'Hey, what do you think of this new plug-in?' We'll use a plug-in totally differently but we inspire each other."

Poirier attributes the nascent scene to a sort of collective consciousness. "Sometimes the same idea happens in two parts of the world with people who've never spoken to each other," he says. "The same idea just happens to be there and sometimes you see links between people. Look at The Bug, who, years ago, was doing mainly noise music

when I was doing mainly ambient music—and now, together, we're doing mainly reggae stuff. It's just change and integrating new stuff as the available technology changes."

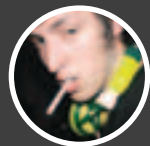
Lazer Sword's Bryant Rutledge has yet another take on it. "The music we're making in our respective scenes sounds very different from one another, but I think there's definitely a mutual respect for one another's output, and the general idea of risk-taking."

TAG, YOU'RE IT

Though these artists love making up funny names, they're seriously reluctant to align themselves with any tag, whether it be lazer bass, future blap, or turbo-crunk. Getting people to talk about a new genre is fine, but more important is getting people to check out the music itself, says Chung.

"There's just no point in being labeled because the sound is changing all the time," Poirier concurs. "But at the same time, it's nice to see people paying attention and making the connections."

BASS IS THE PLACE Lazer Sword's Bryant Rutledge picks five blappers you must seek out.



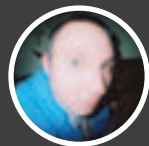
SebastiaN "H.A.L."
(Ed Banger)

Blunt thuds, skittery snares, and a super-chopped vox from Paris, best played *slooooooowwww*.



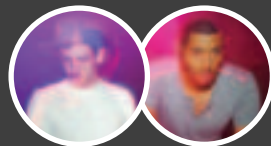
Hot Dollar "Streetz on Lock (Megasoid Rmx)"
(unreleased)

The Jermaine Dupri signee gets a speaker-bustin' Montreal facelift.



Hudson Mohawke "Ooops!" (LuckyMe/Wireblock)

HudMo takes icy, clipped synths and Tweet's "Ooops" vocal to the next level.



Lazer Sword "Gucci Sweatshirt"
(Pish Posh)

1980s style meets 2010s production on this future-hop killer.



Rustie "Zig-zag"
(Wireblock)

Frizzy pads, tight snares, and step-sequenced synths signal the next phase of dubstep.



SASU "LUOMO" RIPATTI ON LEAVING BERLIN,
REFASHIONING HOUSE, AND DECONSTRUCTING HIMSELF.

▲iero
▲iero



It's a chilly night in early March, the wind gusting off the East River as I huddle up and walk towards The Bunker, New York's premiere experimental techno party, in the back room of Brooklyn's Public Assembly bar. Once inside, winter coats are quickly shed and a sweat breaks across the packed crowd's faces. With their eyes half-closed in the dark, the mesmeric pulse booms overhead and bids their bodies to sway like seaweed.

Bathed in the luminescent glow of an open laptop, Finnish producer Sasu Ripatti is the source of those oceanic swells of sound. His Jack Frost facial features—high-set cheeks, pointed nose, and sharp chin—catch the blue light, revealing a smirk as he operates. Ripatti leans between his computer and a device that approximates the snare drum. Intermittently, he whacks it with a screwdriver handle. The resonant hit becomes distended and bandied about the club walls, the beat bouncing around like a game of *jai alai*, the growing bass tones as murky and immersive as the beckoning dark water a block away. Only when an overhead light accidentally flips on for a split second can that metal piece of percussion be seen: two cowbells welded together, with reverb springs as columns on all four corners. It looks like an hourglass laid on its side—an apt metaphor for Ripatti's expert ability to suspend time.

BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE

For over a decade now, Ripatti has loosed some of the most polymorphic, body-moving, head-scrambling, and forward-looking electronic music of the modern age. Every release begs descriptors and genre names. There are the grayscale arrhythmic ambient washes that he releases as Vladislav Delay, the mercurial yet pounding music made as Uusitalo (a Finnish word meaning "new house"), and then there's Luomo. The latter is his most revered *nom de plume*, yet Ripatti still doesn't get the popularity of that particular project. "Luomo, in my case, I don't take it too seriously," he says. "It can be fun and whatnot, but I did not create Luomo to find a new audience or any of that stuff, nor to get fame."

But Luomo *did* find a new audience for Ripatti, and for most listeners, it remains his lasting statement. After an early career within the confines of Chain Reaction's heroin house and Mille Plateaux's clicks + cuts *cul de sacs*, Ripatti re-imagined minimal house music from outside of the scene. This was house music as if erected by Frank Gehry: all reflective, metallic surfaces gloriously towering up at sumptuous angles. What's made Luomo special is the emotive light it casts, the sensuous heart that remains beating at its core. And yet rather than try to replicate such success, or repeat the formula, Ripatti and his personas have continued to fracture and evolve over time, each entity growing more prolific. (In 2007 alone, Luomo, Vladislav Delay, and Uusitalo all released full-length albums.)

STEPPING OUT

Ripatti has snuck into Gotham to finish up a track for *Convivial*, his fourth album as Luomo. Right after he closes his laptop and packs up his gear, he makes for the Midtown studio belonging to Scissor Sisters'



"FALTERING, COLLAPSE,
DISINTEGRATION..."

...THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS SOMETIMES, RIGHT?"





Jake Shears to finish up a collaborative track, “If I Can’t,” in the wee hours. Somewhere in the city, Ripatti’s partner (and fellow peerless producer) Antye Greie-Fuchs, who records as AGF, tends to Lumi Charlotte Ripatti, the couple’s two-year-old daughter. The next morning, the family will be flying back to Europe, a whirlwind of a trip.

Reclusive for the first part of his music-making career, Ripatti has only in the past few years begun to step out a bit. If anything, *Convivial* serves as his coming-out party; with seven guests providing vocals, it’s a downright extroverted and celebratory affair. He worked extensively with each of the vocalists in his home studio, White Room, tucked inside the Prenzlauer Berg neighborhood in Berlin. *Paper Tigers* singer Johanna Iivanainen returns, and legendary U.K. house vocalist Robert Owens makes an appearance; Cassy, Sue Cie, and Sascha Ring (a.k.a. Apparat) also lend their talents. And then there’s “Chubbs,” a singer whose major-label obligations require the mysterious pseudonym.

Whereas most Luomo albums feature finely diced and distended sibilants, where even puffs of breath take on tantric lengths, the vocals are mostly left alone on *Convivial*. “I wanted to make a more pop-oriented album this time, which goes hand in hand with more clear vocals,” Ripatti explains. “Most of the vocalists I had never worked with before so it would’ve felt a bit strange to fuck up their vocals right away.”

“There was always this organic nature to all of Vladislav Delay’s sounds and beats and I felt like I could listen to it forever,” says Sue C., recalling her first impressions of his Chain Reaction productions. “Ever since then he has been one of my favorite producers. There are so many beautiful and subtle things going on that you can listen over and over again. I had listened to a sketch of our track [“Nothing Goes Away”] many times and the lyrics came together suddenly; I actually wrote it in the shower one morning.”

LONG, STRANGE TRIP

While the different elements that make up *Convivial* came together in Ripatti’s studio in Berlin, this past summer Ripatti and family left their flat in Germany and repatriated to his native

Finland. “It feels great to be back home,” he tells me later via email from his new residence, in an island off the coast, surrounded by the Baltic Sea. “It’s the nature, I guess, and the solitude.” After seven years of living at the epicenter of electronic dance music, Ripatti reached a saturation point. “I really prefer the non-exposure to all that stuff,” he says. “[In Berlin] I didn’t feel freedom, but instead some pressure to conform to some things that exist already.”

Ripatti initially left the snowy, flat landscapes of Helsinki for Berlin, not to immerse himself in the club scene but to escape the bad habits he had acquired back home. “I was strongly inspired by and into the whole mind- and reality-altering thing, escaping the ‘now’ and living somewhere else,” he admits. “There were long periods back then when I was really quite out of it—but fortunately, more often than not, spending time sketching out some musical ideas. I’m glad there always was the strong drive to make and be with music—otherwise who knows what might have happened.”

Drugs and music have long been entwined, from the marijuana and heroin that powered jazz improvisation in New York to the Benzadrine that kept Northern Soul parties dancing, not to mention Ecstasy in Madchester and club scenes worldwide. But for Ripatti, the chemicals had very little to do with the music itself. “There was absolutely no clubbing lifestyle [to it], but rather a pure drug lifestyle. I have taken more or less every possible drug there is. It was my passion and hobby for quite a long time, until it became a bad addiction.” He retains fond memories of such debauchery. “Like hearing [Tricky’s] *Maxinquaye* for the first time,” he recalls. “Smoking pot constantly for like a week, and listening to the record in loop, thinking it was the most amazing music I ever heard.” Nonetheless, the lifestyle had serious repercussions. Canceled tours, jail time, and failed relationships were nothing compared to suffering two heart attacks in his early 20s, which resulted in two serious heart operations that remain a low point in his life.

BOOK OF CHANGES

While the hardest substance he imbibes today is green tea, the blissed-out, nervy, and disorienting

nature of the drug experience remains part of his sound (the name of Ripatti’s imprint, Huume, even refers to dope). And arrhythmia continues to inform his beat-making. Traces of house and minimal techno in his productions remain unsteady, slippery things, ever-changing and challenging listeners’ expectations as to where the next hit will fall. Ambient albums like *Anima* and *The Four Quarters* have rhythms to them but they eschew 4/4 entirely, coming across instead as aleatoric and amoebic entities. On *Anima*, tracks tumble like waves on the shore while *The Four Quarters* finds sounds endlessly crumbling into earth. “That’s what I like in music, that it lives like a life or movie, that it’s not just a metronome—steady and artificial in that way,” Ripatti explains. “Faltering, collapse, disintegration... That’s what life is sometimes, right? So music should be as well. I don’t want, nor do I try, to separate my music from my life.”

Glistening and propulsive as the poppy beats are on *Convivial*, there remain moments when corridors and wormholes appear in the mix, taking tracks to strange places. The melancholic intro of “Slow Dying Places” steadily fills every corner with synth curlicues and blossoming pad hits. Dubby space creeps into the otherwise clipped pace of “Nothing Goes Away,” while the already hazy and echoing closer “Lonely Music Co.” nearly tightens up into a tricky two-step rhythm before dissipating entirely.

“Change is the only constant” goes the Heraclitus maxim. But though Vladislav Delay, Uusitalo, and Luomo all explore the nature of change, evolution, and dissolution, the man behind them all is keen to also emphasize the “constant” part of the equation. “I think I am still chasing the same dream, still acting on the same trigger, as when I made the *Kind of Blue* EP [his self-released debut from 1997],” he says. “Which is to somehow achieve my personal musical fantasies, to create something musically not yet heard and experienced.”

Luomo’s *Convivial* is out now on Huume. luomomusic.org

FOR THE RECORD Sasu Ripatti reflects on the technology behind three of his key releases.

“The main thing for me is to look for unique and unusual sounds,” says Sasu Ripatti. “And it’s easier to find that in handmade physical objects and by treating them rather than buying analog vintage electronics or new software.” No doubt his roots as a free-jazz drummer inform his bent towards natural sounds: “Before I even knew what a synthesizer was, I was into custom-made freaky percussion stuff, looking for weird sounds from there. That’s always been a strong foundation for me.”

Luomo *Convivial* (2008)

“I felt like giving the guest vocals more space this time. I had taken all that effecting and dubbing the vocals to a certain extreme on *Paper Tigers*. I have taken a step backwards, technology-wise, [so as to see] the whole thing in a bigger picture. It allows me to see that what is really important... technology is often micro and that is not what music should be about.”

Uusitalo *Karhunainen* (2007)

“This was the closest to nerdy electronics music-making as I have ever got. I decided to keep all sound sources and processing analog. I also took time to play lots of beats by hand via MIDI keyboards or drum pads, and use lots of physical sounds recorded via microphone that I then played back via sampler.”

Vladislav Delay *Multila* (2000)

“*Multila* was released when I was just beginning and had a lovely simple analog set-up in my flat. It was partly to do with not having much gear and also being so out of my head with drugs and whatnot that I couldn’t really get the sound anywhere beyond cloudy, dubby sound fields with no highs at all. But all the same that gave the music a somewhat unique edge. I couldn’t make that sound again. It’s incredibly hard to go backwards and be believable and true to yourself simultaneously.”

“ I D O N ’ T W A N T , N O R D O I T R Y , T O S E P A R A T E

M Y M U S I C F R O M M Y L I F E . ”

GREY GARDENS

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HAIR: MARCEL DAGENAIS / MAKEUP: SUSIE SOBOL
PROP STYLIST: CLAY RODERY / MODEL: LEAH HIGHT @ FUSION
PHOTO ASSISTANT: JON CARROLL / PROP ASSISTANT: KEN KARASAWA
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ALBUM REVIEWS

1/09



ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

Merriweather Post Pavilion

Domino/US/CD

PHOTO TAKAHIRO IMAMURA

"Our Lost Summer" compilation

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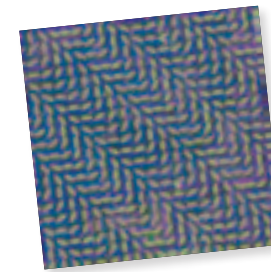
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AC TURNS DOWN
THE CRAZINESS JUST
ENOUGH TO MAKE
A TRULY BRILLIANT
POP RECORD.

It seems like every time Animal Collective releases an album, reviewers and critics line up to declare that the band's "pop" moment has arrived. After all, the Brooklyn outfit has slowly but surely moved away from the borderline obnoxious, campfire-sing-along-on-acid aesthetic that once defined their sound. *Merriweather Post Pavilion* continues that transition, and while it remains to be seen whether or not this is truly the band's pop moment, the album undoubtedly contains Animal Collective's most palatable, and best, music to date.

Where 2007's *Strawberry Jam* found AC co-founder Avey Tare front-and-center, *Merriweather* has his partner Panda Bear's stylistic fingerprints all over it; the album displays the same sort of sun-drenched psychedelic pop and general sense of grandeur that defined Panda's 2007 solo opus, *Person Pitch*. Yet this is undoubtedly an Animal Collective record; while Avey Tare may have reeled himself in a bit, his voice remains in the forefront, though his affinity for jarring yelps, screeches, and senseless noisemaking seems to have subsided.

Animal Collective has certainly never been shy about experimentation and sonic excess, but something has undoubtedly changed. While calling *Merriweather* a mature album may sound terribly condescending, as though past efforts were primarily driven by impetuous recklessness and a general lack of self-awareness, this is the first time that the band has fully realized the power of restraint. Album opener "In the Flowers" begins with two and a half minutes of serene loops of white noise, tinkling keys, and calmly delivered vocals before exploding with a magnificent burst

of melody and Avey Tare's suddenly soaring voice. That said, it's not as if Animal Collective has churned out some sort of vanilla pop record; there is plenty of sonic weirdness to digest on *Merriweather*. A looped didgeridoo makes up the primary beat of "Lion In a Coma." The woozy "Daily Routine" features dubby basslines and synth flourishes that recall old videogames until they're looped into a mystical crescendo about halfway through the song.

Oddly enough, this might also be the band's most electronic record to date—it's certainly the most programmed. Album standout "My Girls" is anchored by an arpeggiated synth and low-end bass stabs, not to mention Avey Tare's sonorous multitracked vocals. A similar synth arpeggio makes an appearance on "Summertime Clothes," a propulsive slice of pop (that also happens to be the best song on the album). Avey Tare and Panda Bear go back and forth on vocals, awash in swirling synths, fluttering melodies, and other oddball sounds.

As with anything involving Panda Bear, *Merriweather* owes a certain debt to The Beach Boys, and especially Brian Wilson. Both "Bluish" and "No More Runnin'" could be updated songs from the *Pet Sounds* sessions. Yet Panda Bear is not the lone voice on these songs; Avey Tare has also learned to channel Wilson as part of his ever-expanding vocal repertoire. No longer can the two be crudely distinguished as "the guy with the crazy voice" and "the guy who sounds like The Beach Boys." Now they're both just the frontmen of a group that happens to be making some of the most interesting and compelling music around. *Shawn Reynaldo*

GAISER

Blank Fade

Minus/GER/CD

If there's one lesson we've learned in 2008, it's that minimal techno is not nearly evil enough. On *Blank Fade*, Detroit's Jon Gaiser injects pitch-black dread into the heart of his distinct brand of techno. Steamrolling basslines, droplets of toxic rain, and ghostly sirens all coalesce into swinging, propulsive grooves that stretch into a never-ending night. Gaiser demonstrates his knack for creating arrangements that are both claustrophobic and spacious, crafting an hour-long ride through some of the most banging, evil minimal tracks to date, not to mention some dark-ambient business that would leave Deathprod envious. At its most compelling ("Trunkated," "Leave It," "Decending Order"), *Blank Fade* paints a picture of a raging warehouse party at the edge of hell. *Tim Saputo*



TELEFON TEL AVIV

Immolate Yourself

BPitch Control/GER/CD

Artists who compose filmic music, much like actual directors, work between two modes: close-up and slowly panning scenery. On 2004's micro-edit-heavy *Map of What Is Effortless*, Chicago-via-New Orleans duo of Josh Eustis and Charlie Cooper seemed more quick-cut and tightly framed. But after almost five years absorbing the palpable erosions of minimalism and detuning hardware synths, Telefon Tel Aviv has swapped guitars and digitally bit-crushed calculation for sabotaged analogs and tonal chronology. These 10 tracks of glamorous desolation, all bleary vocals and grainy drifts, have been strung out rather than chopped up. "Helen of Troy" is unrepentant vintage pop, basically A-Ha on a diet of oxidized melodies. The rest of *Immolate Yourself's* sonic real estate has the distending surface tension of a funhouse mirror, creating an album as glazed as it is evocative. *Tony Ware*

ANOTHER ELECTRONIC MUSICIAN

FIVE

n5MD/US/CD

Ignore Jase Rex's self-belittling name, as the Southern California IDM artist's fifth album is filled with grooves and atmospheric textures that easily surpass the efforts of the average bedroom electronic musician. He molds a typewriter's clacks into a drifting soul groove on "Conjecture Correction," while the excellent "Low Company" interweaves birdsong into a drizzling space-jazz ballad. Elsewhere, the interlocked synth melodies and darting, UFO-like noises on the ambient "Congee" hark back to the dank, VapoRub-smearred chill-out rooms of raves past. With any luck, this music will play in the hospital waiting rooms and drunk tanks of the future. *Cameron Macdonald*



ANAVAN

COVER STORY

Slanty Shanty/US/CD

Isn't Los Angeles supposed to be filled with mindless corporate-rock drones? Something has changed, because it seems like L.A.'s Smell scene has become the punk-rock center of the universe. No Age, Mika Miko, The Mae Shi, HEALTH, Abe Vigoda—the bands keep coming, and now you can add Anavan to the list. *Cover Story*, the band's sophomore album, finds the keyboard-driven trio settling into a decidedly dance-oriented sound that also happens to be a whole lot more fun than that of their Smell compatriots. "The Perfect Sound" is like a muscled-up B-52's or Go-Go's tune, while the synthy beats of "Boom" and "Off to a Fighting Start" are sure to incite some serious crust-punker dance parties. *August Howard*

ASOBI SEKSU

HUSH

Polyvinyl/US/CD

For those who long for the embrace of shoegaze's swirling guitar fuzz (or were simply too young to catch it the first time around), it's easy to lionize revivalist outfits like Asobi Seksu. Unfortunately, *Hush* actually finds the New York band stripping down its wall of noise. While the guitars still shimmer and Yuki Chikudate's vocals lightly float throughout the record, turning down the distortion pedal was not the best move, as *Hush* is simply too clean for its own good. Even when album standouts "Familiar Light" and "Sunshowers" pleasantly recall The Cocteau Twins, one can't help but wonder how much better they could have been with some ear-splitting noise thrown into the mix. *Shawn Reynaldo*

AIDAN BAKER AND TIM HECKER

FANTASMA PARASTASIE

Alien8/CAN/CD

Amongst the many visions conjured by this debut collaboration between two big names in the admittedly small circle of ambient/drone music, few are musical. Think of the bizarrely cellular organics of a Hieronymus Bosch painting—images that are simultaneously bulbous and disjointed. With a palette of dark and often discordant colors comprised of hyper-distorted electric guitars and overblown synthesizers, Baker and Hecker create music worthy of the luminous noise names whom they reference as touchstones, such as Merzbow and MuslimGauze. This is music as finely articulated as a symphony, loud enough to be painful, and arcane enough to warrant repeat listening. Loud is, indeed, the new quiet. *Justin Hopper*

CLUE TO KALO

LILY PERDIDA

Mush/US/CD

The hippie-fied production baked into Clue to Kalo's *One Way, It's Every Way* returns in great form on *Lily Perdida*, but it ain't easy listenin'. Boasting orchestral folk trimmings and fussily woven vocal harmonies, *Lily* finds CTK's Mark Mitchell paired with Ellen Carey (and her twee stylings) for 10 odes to the fictional character for which the album is named. Sharp moments are many—"Lull for Dear Life" shifts from churchy balladry to sparkling pop in a flash, and "The Infinite Orphan" is marked by an earnest devotion to '60s mod fare—but *Lily* must've been some difficult kid. This is a dense, challenging ride, where the search for the big hooks is sometimes derailed by an onslaught of smaller ones. *Dominic Umile*

COMPOST DREIHUNDERT: FRESHLY COMPOSTED VOL. 3

Compost/GER/CD

For its 300th release, and the third installment of its *Freshly Composted* sampler-style collection series, Compost Records proves once again that electronic neo- and dance-jazz not only deserves to remain on our musical radar, but might just be a beacon—not a blip. Compost's signature warm, augmented chords and loping dance beats appear on tracks like Alif Tree's "Mai" and Beanfield's "Tides," and Eddy Meets Yannah's "Solid Ground" has that spiritual crescendo that Body & Soul would've died for. Perhaps the collection's finest track, Wojtek Urbanski's "Violet Violin" uses circa-2001 glitches and a broken beat to augment a proud and schizophrenic violin schema. If they'll sound anything like this, let Compost's next 300 roll on! *Justin Hopper*

DEVIN THE DUDE

LANDING GEAR

Razor & Tie/US/CD

Houston hemp-hopper Devin the Dude has one of rap's best personalities—right up there with Biz Markie and Flavor Flav. Somehow, Devin's laid-back, somewhat humorous, regular-guy-just-tryna-get-high shtick never gets tired, and *Landing Gear's* mostly midtempo, subtly soulful grooves take him to his destination. Sparse beats place the emphasis squarely on Devin's sublimely stoned delivery, and on tracks like "I Can't Make It Home," "Let Me Know It's Real," and "I Don't Chase 'Em (feat. Snoop Dogg)," the perennial underdog makes a strong case for much wider appreciation without going over-the-top commercial. If you're looking for something chill to listen to while you get your smoke on, it's hard to go wrong here. *Eric K. Arnold*

ECCENTRIC SOUL: THE YOUNG DISCIPLES

Número Group/US/CD

It only takes a few bars of LaVel Moore's "The World is Changing" to remember that the Numero Group is amongst the most prescient archivists of American music working today. "Changing" could be an Obama-era cry of hopeful civility—the fact that it was recorded in the drug-and-gang-ravaged streets of 1970s East St. Louis, Illinois just shows that music needn't be known to prove timeless. This Eccentric installment explores East St. Louis' Young Disciples—a program that replaced needles and guns with guitars and song amongst '70s "at risk" youths. The result was a diverse assortment of political funk ("Crumbs From the Table"), boy-girl ballads ("Girls, Girls, Girls"), and northern-soul dancers (The Georgettes' brilliant "Hard Hard"). *Justin Hopper*

FABRIC 43: METRO AREA

Fabric/UK/CD

With disco's undeniable resurgence in recent years, it comes as no surprise that Brooklyn duo Metro Area would be tapped for its own installment of the vaunted Fabric mix series. Morgan Geist and Darshan Jesrani have been releasing top-shelf disco for nearly a decade, and *Fabric 43* provides a great window into the sounds that inspire them. Digging heavily into oddball later disco from the mid-'80s, many of the tracks show flourishes of electro and '80s funk, sounds often ignored by disco revivalists. The boys also mix in a few offbeat early NY house cuts and even tap songs from '80s powerhouses Ministry and Devo, ultimately crafting a mix that is both impeccably curated and ready to party. *August Howard*

FENNESZ

BLACK SEA

Touch/UK/CD

For every inner child that fantasized about harnessing the power of telekinesis, the electrostatic flutter and wow of Austria's Christian Fennesz grips tightly with seemingly no origin. Over the course of five full-length studio albums, Fennesz has clarified his command of sonic accidents, fining and refining the harmonic castoff of his acoustic guitar and keyboards. In stark contrast to 2004's *Venice*, its pop filigree braided from semi-directed transients and maws of static, *Black Sea* feels ever more disassociated, yet maintains an affecting heft. Far less centered on the granular residue of individual note strikes, these eight tracks are topped by a froth of aerated reverb that gradually coalesces into subtle melodies. Without a single punch, it leaves you breathless. *Tony Ware*

B. FLEISCHMANN

ANGST IS NOT A WELTANSCHAUUNG

Morr/GER/CD

When it comes to wistful indietronica, the Morr Music gang has pretty much got the game on lock. Vienna's B. Fleischmann has been making these kinds of records for nearly a decade, so he's mastered all the tricks—the melancholy piano lines, ambient background fuzz, gently plucked guitars, and skittery bedroom beats are all here. What sets *Angst* apart is Fleischmann's use of guest vocalists, especially Sweet William Van Ghost ("Hello," "24:12," "In Trains"), whose dusky tones sound like a cross between Casiotone for the Painfully Alone and The National's Matt Berninger. Even Daniel Johnston makes an appearance, lending his oddball pop credentials to "Phones, Machines and King Kong." *Shawn Reynaldo*

I LOVE DUBSTEP

Rinse/UK/2CD

This two-disc compilation contains a pair of DJ mixes of some of the best released and unreleased dubstep tracks of the past few years. The first, mixed by Youngsta, gives the music a historical context by featuring the slow, booming, bass-wobbling sound (from artists like Loefah, Distance, Hijack, and Benga) associated with scenes largely based in London and Bristol. The superior second mix by Geneus looks forward to the future of dub, inserting genre-busting selections by Shackleton, TRG (as remixed by Martyn), The Bug, Kode 9, 2562, Mala, Skream, and Burial, the breakout star who still rules with his haunting, indefinable talent. *Walter Wasacz*

JUSTICE

A CROSS THE UNIVERSE

Atlantic/US/CD-DVD

On this live CD attachment for the Parisian duo's tour documentary, Justice almost redeems itself by making another album of diabolically dirty French electro. As



expected, they overload the pomp and hack up house beats into sputtering, un-oiled rhythms where mere cymbal splashes could blow out speakers. While live tweaks imbue "D.A.N.C.E." with new life and manage to make Uffie's rap cameo about 5% less painful, Justice cuts off too many songs right when the momentum builds. "We Are Your Friends" is little more than a two-minute jukebox sing-along. On the other end of the spectrum, they also overindulge in 10 minutes of garbage-disposed synth riffs on the finale, "Phantom Part 2." *Cameron Macdonald*

MATT AND KIM

GRAND

Fader/US/CD

Exactly how much ground can a band cover with only a keyboard and drum kit at its disposal? On *Grand*, Brooklyn duo Matt and Kim arrive at an answer: not much. Sure, there is fun to be had here, and Matt and Kim's legions of dance-party enthusiasts will undoubtedly lap up the band's second album of stompy drums, Casio synths, and emo vocals, especially sing-alongs like "Daylight," "I Wanna," "Cutdown," and "Lesson Learned." Oddly enough, the band may have been better served by making a sloppier record—*Grand* was recorded in the isolation of Matt's childhood bedroom in Vermont, perhaps explaining the duo's choice to tone down its previous devotion to reckless abandon. What's wrong with just being a party band? *Shawn Reynaldo*

MAX TUNDRA

PARALLAX ERROR BEHEADS YOU

Domino/US/CD

The first album from British multi-MIDI-instrumentalist Max Tundra in six years, these 10 tracks appropriately share a name with a phenomenon of angular displacement. Tundra's tonal OCD shifts unrelentingly, rocking the point of perception from plane to plane. The one constant is spy pop instincts. Before Jamie Lidell hiccupped through the Motown and Stax catalogs, Tundra explored Paisley Park. These days he's mixing diced funk with Scritti Politti's wordplay and falsetto synth-pop patches. Then steps in the vintage sequencer's gleeful micro-editing, which plays the part of twitchy hype man to the most exuberant, accessible hooks of Tundra's career, mechanically galvanized to the max on "Which Song," "Orphaned," "Number Our Days," and "Until We Die." *Tony Ware*

TRIBE

Tribe

Community Projects-Planet E/US/CD

Not a Carl Craig record, though it has the stamp of the famed Detroit techno producer throughout, the Tribe's new full-length is a near-perfect record for the times. By standing behind the politics of love in an age of global dread, that jazz remains an on-message American art form. The mood set here is solemn; the spacey abstract expressionism of the original group's pioneering early 1970s material is largely absent, their sound re-shaped into a neo-traditional funk-jazz package. Yet surviving members Phil Ranelin, Wendell Harrison, Marcus Belgrave, and Doug Hammond sure can swing, especially on standout track "Livin' in a New Day." It's layered with trombones, trumpets, saxophones, and Ranelin's vocals, all deftly electronically treated by Craig in his Motor City studio. *Walter Wasacz*



PHOTOS TIMOTHY SHERIDAN

OH NO ON MY WAY

Stones Throw/US/CD

Apparently re-imagining runs in the family. On the heels of his older brother Madlib's recent reworking of the classic *Madvillainy* album, Oh No has gone and put a new spin on his debut album, *The Disrupt. On My Way* finds the Oxnard rapper laying his original rhymes over new beats assembled entirely from samples dug out of the Now-Again Records catalog. Mining classic funk and soul cuts, Oh No's beatmaking prowess has come a long way since 2004, and his raps sound surprisingly fresh over the same kinds of cut-and-paste beats that made his brother famous. This may only be a must-listen for hardcore fans and beat junkies, but Oh No is on the way up. *Shawn Reynaldo*



ALICE RUSSELL POT OF GOLD

Six Degrees/US/CD

Joss who? Amy who? The best-meaning quirkiest and most original-young British soul siren around is Alice Russell. Though her sound is pleasantly accessible, Russell aims beyond retro-chic or pop-tart gloss; she's in the game to shake things up a bit. She coaxes a surprising amount of power out of her slim frame, going from a whisper to a scream in about 0.2 seconds, and her kookiness (and inspired arrangements) rescues *Pot of Gold* from typical U.K. R&B cliché-dom. Her version of Gnarls Barkley's "Crazy" doesn't outdo the original, but easily stands on its own, while "Got the Hunger" simmers with Motown-ish sass. But Russell's not just renting a room in Soulsville—she wants to own it. *Eric K. Arnold*

DAMIÁN SCHWARTZ PARTY LOVERS

Net28/SPA/CD

Madrid's Damián Schwartz nurtures a thumping future-retro regiment of paced soul claps and piano-enriched diffusion. In January 2008, Schwartz released "Química Afluencia," a 12" that sputtered with sibilant percussion, its musky physicality straining at minimal's tailoring. This debut full-length furthers the fascination with condensing Chicago house's enraptured chords and Detroit techno's trim programming, then applying them with an atomizer before going to a tribal gathering in Berlin. Those looking for a fragrance with bass notes of Moodymann's shuffling grooves, mid notes of Minilogue's synthetic melodies, and top notes of Ricardo Villalobos' vocal choppiness should apply liberally, especially the tracks "Dos Dias Despues," "Lo Que Sube Baja," and "Raw." *Tony Ware*

SEÑOR COCONUT AROUND THE WORLD

Nacional/US/CD

When Uwe Schmidt moved from Germany to Chile in 1996, he was determined to explore traditional Latin music in the context of the electronic sounds he'd been creating at home. As his moniker implies, there is a bit of playfulness in his songs. How else would one account for his Cuban tempering of "Sweet Dreams," or his marimba-led take of Prince's "Kiss"? All songs on *Around the World* are covers, and all are treated with the same comic, musically exceptional care. The drumming is fantastic; the videogame digital effects combined with the live percussion and marimba on "Pinball Chacha" are proof enough of his skill as producer and musician. *Derek Beres*

SKELETONS MONEY

Tomlab/GER/CD

Skeletons is one of the few contemporary bands that can legitimately be called "original." Led by Matt Mehlman, the New York quartet has wrangled a distinctive mélange of leftfield influences into un-purist jolts of sonic dazzlement. A mere list of Skeletons' stylistic tropes—No Wave, free jazz, Afrobeat, post-punk, high life, the artiest art rock—doesn't do justice to the wallop of exciting newness that each track on *Money* delivers. Mehlman and Co. have synthesized some of the most sublime fringe-music tics into novel expressions of artistry. Their formal innovation combines with emotional heft—Mehlman's voice is a supple, subtle instrument of deep feeling—to forge an unforgettable listen that seems destined to improve over time. Just don't expect to tidily classify it. *Dave Segal*

THE ROOTS OF HIP-HOP: FROM CHURCH TO GANGSTA

Harte/US/CD

When considering the origins of hip-hop, few look past the Sugar Hill Records era or the Bronx block parties of the '70s. But the relatively unknown Harte label is attempting to broaden the discussion with *The Roots of Hip Hop*. This 26-song set collects slices of country blues, boogie-woogie, and acappella church talk—all from the 1930s to 1950s. On the whole, this historic black music is great, yet some selections (like doo-wop love ballad "The Letter"), while enjoyable, have little connection to hip-hop. To Harte's credit, at times you can clearly hear the influence that has been passed on to MCs, as on the Soul Stirrers' politically driven "Why I Like Roosevelt (Parts 1 and 2)," and the badass chick braggadocio of "Hot Mama" by Brother Woodman & The Chanters featuring Ethel Brown. *Max Herman*

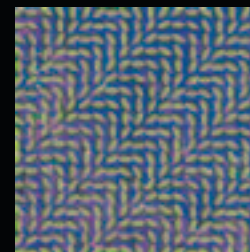
ZION-I THE TAKEOVER

Gold Dust/US/CD

On their fourth full-length, the Bay Area duo of producer Amplive and MC Zumbi returns with an album grounded in '80s influences, yet conceived with a forward-thinking thrust. Tribal drums segue into 808-enhanced freaky funk on opening track "Geek to the Beat" to create something as energetic as hyphy or crunk, but with consciously militant lyrics. "Take Over" finds Zumbi—whose once-thin voice has matured into a weapon to be reckoned with—scolding non-believers: "Burn an incense, they tried to call us yoga/A couple years in, set to take this game over." Tracks with Brother Ali, Devin the Dude, Ty, and Jennifer Johns add to the album's breadth, but Zion-I does most of the heavy lifting itself. *Eric K. Arnold*



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Artists To Watch



PACO OSUNA

Barcelona, Spain

Spain isn't exactly known as a minimal techno hotspot (except for those magical two weeks in June known as Sónar). After all, the country is home to Ibiza, an island overstuffed with pudgy, drug-addled clubbers collectively losing their minds to Euro-space dance music. But in recent years, a handful of artists have succeeded in putting Barcelona on the techno map, and none more so than Paco Osuna. With his Club4 parties bringing in top-flight DJs and his Mindshake record label releasing a steady stream of high-quality techno, Osuna has certainly caught people's attention. Richie Hawtin is a fan, having tapped Osuna for a number of releases and remixes; this year's *Orbeat* EP was particularly good, and we're looking forward to his remixes of Plastikman for Minus' 10th anniversary compilation. Last fall's *Twins* EP also lit up minimal dancefloors, so anticipation is high for a proper artist album, which is in the works. 2009 will also find Osuna doing a stint in Chicago while he focuses on DJing more in the United States and Latin America.

myspace.com/pacoosuna



CRYSTAL ANTLERS

Long Beach, CA

The past year has seen an onslaught of "Crystal" bands, but it's easy to remember that Crystal Antlers are the one band in the bunch that rocks. Crafting a unique brand of organ-drenched punk, Crystal Antlers are further anchored by the raw bellows of frontman Jonny Bell. The quintet formed in 2006 and dropped a few 7" singles and an EP before hooking up with Touch & Go, who will be releasing the band's forthcoming full-length.

myspace.com/crystalantlers



AC SLATER

Brooklyn, NY

Much like his friends from Trouble & Bass, AC Slater can keep the party going while simultaneously championing dance music's low-end. Yet Slater (a.k.a. Aaron Clevenger) is more than a simple bass fanatic—his recent Palms Out Sounds single, "Jack Got Jacked," flips Fingers Inc.'s classic house cut. Already turning heads with rave-tinged remixes for the likes of Moby, Freestylers, and Drop the Lime, this former happy hardcore producer is starting his own digital imprint called Party Like Us.

myspace.com/theacslater



TOY SELECTAH

Monterrey, Mexico

It's odd to tout the driving force behind Control Machete, one of Mexico's biggest hip-hop groups ever, as an up-and-coming artist, but Toy Selectah (a.k.a. Toy Hernandez) has been championing a new-school take on classic *cumbia colombiana*. The rhythm has been on blast in Latin America for decades, but Toy's bootleg *cumbia* remixes of artists like Lil Wayne, Justice, and Boysnoize have perked up ears on both sides of the equator. With 2009 releases planned for both Mad Decent and Bersa Discos, both Toy and *cumbia* are about to blow up.

myspace.com/toyselectahdj



DELOREAN

Barcelona, Spain

In the congested field of danceable rock music, Spanish quartet Delorean thankfully stands out. Armed with post-punk basslines, an affinity for tinkling piano melodies, and a sunny pop sensibility, the band is putting the finishing touches on a new EP for Fluokids offshoot Foolhouse. They've also flexed their production muscle recently on remixes of The Teenagers, The Mystery Jets, and Lemonade, which probably get plenty of spins at Desparame, the band's club night has hosted acts like Radioclit and Top Billin.

myspace.com/deloreananz

Bass Guest Reviews: Sinden



Graeme Sinden's weekly radio show on London's KISS is a basically a must-listen for anyone seeking the latest bass-driven sounds emanating from the dark corners of the globe. Hip-hop, grime, B-more, electro, bassline, *kuduro*, *kwaito*, *cumbia*, *baile* funk—he's championed them all, as evidenced by his recent mix for the *Fabriclive* series. Yet Sinden is no slouch on the production front, having churned out a steady stream of remixes and an increasing number of original productions with his partner-in-crime Hervé as The Count & Sinden. They've also launched a new project called Machines Don't Care, literally a supergroup-style collaboration with Trevor Loveys, Fake Blood, Toddla T, Drop the Lime, and other A-list producers. Here, Sinden talks about some of the bangers he's been feeling lately. *Shawn Reynaldo*
myspace.com/graemesinden

DJ CLASS "I'M THE ISH"

Unruly/US/12

This one took me by complete surprise! Baltimore club's finest producer returns, and turns in a production that leaves contemporaries trailing in his wake. Class brings the genre right up to date—lead synths, all AutoTuned vocals (petronome in my cup!), and those tough club drums. A legend.

PIDDY PY "GIGGLE RIDDIM"

Dress 2 Sweat/UK/12

A young bassline house producer from Manchester arrives hot on the scene with this fresh dub, to be released on Glasgow's Dress 2 Sweat. I love the *waaaay* swung drums, unpredictable bassline, and, of course, the sampled laughter that is scattered throughout. Sinister business.

D1 "OINGY BOINGY"

Tempa/UK/12

This is a fresh party starter from the always-amazing D1, who deserves more credit for his productions. I love the rhythmic patterns at work here, combining nicely with the pads of Detroit techno. This is house-inspired dubstep that's pushing the scene into brand-new territories.

LITTLE BOOTS "MEDDLE (JOKER REMIX)"

White/UK/12

Little Boots is doing it big right now, especially the work I've heard with Joe from Hot Chip. The original is a nicely crafted pop offering and this remix is a twisted-up, soulful, saw-bass'd banger! She's gonna be massive for '09.



Cy Young Exactly!

The long-awaited debut album from the Low Budget crew member. Double-CD includes full album instrumentals, with beats by Kev Brown, Roddy Rod, Khrysis, and more.



Dela Changes of Atmosphere

The debut release from French producer Dela mixes atmospheric beats with guest vocals from Talib Kweli, Elzhi, Blu, Les Nubians, Large Pro, J-Live, and many more...



Reef The Lost Cauze A Vicious Cycle

Army of the Pharaohs core member and one of the most renowned lyricists in Philly, Reef the Lost Cauze finally drops his 2nd release. Includes the single "I Wonder" produced by Marco Polo



Ugly Duckling Audacity

Long Beach trio Ugly Duckling return with their fifth release, as the playful lyricism of Andy Cooper and Dizzy Dustin remains a perfect match for the expert sampling of Young Einstein.



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IN THE STUDIO: SEÑOR COCONUT

A DECORATIVE LOOK INTO THE WORLD OF A MAN AND HIS LATIN-INSPIRED COVER VERSIONS.

German-Chilean techno vet Uwe Schmidt surprised many a decade ago when he stepped into the spotlight shaking his *maracas* as Señor Coconut. On Coconut's debut 2000 album, *El Baile Alemán*, he revised German electro-pop godfathers Kraftwerk as a very un-robotic Latin dance band, stitching together samples of Latin dance records to unleash *merengue*, *cumbia*, and *cha-cha-cha* covers of "Trans Europe Express," "Autobahn," and other classics. The Señor is back with his second album, *Around the World*, on which he leads live musicians through *rumba* and *mambo* renditions of tunes by Daft Punk, Prince, and Eurythmics. *XLBR* spoke to the Santiago resident about the Coconut touch.

XLBR: I'VE READ THAT YOUR STUDIO MOTTO IS "DECORATION INSTEAD OF GEAR."

Uwe Schmidt: [Laughs] During the last 20 years of making music, I've always found that it's more important for me to focus on musical ideas. The tools are important, of course; it's like any craft or art, and with the tools you build whatever you build. I wanted to reduce [my set-up] to a very specific tool and try to solve as much as possible with that tool. The pressure or limitation that comes from it, I've always found very inspiring. It's always been a great source of inspiration to have almost no instruments or no tools at all, just one very powerful main tool. So, maybe it was like seven years ago when machines got smaller and smaller and more powerful, all of sudden I was sitting in a very big, empty room with just a pair of speakers. I had the idea of just making the [room] more comfortable—instead of buying more equipment, I'd buy more decorations.

WHAT PIECE OF STUDIO GEAR IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SEÑOR COCONUT SOUND?

Mainly Pro Tools. That's the biggest portion of the sound. Also, I have reduced to using a set of two or three plug-ins and it's nothing fancy either. It's very good sound for a digital environment. I basically mixed the entire album with three plug-ins. The idea was to achieve a good recording in the studio so the mix wouldn't need [to be] drastic or complicated. It's like in the past, a little bit. I'm very impressed by the recordings from the '50s and even before, where [studio] technology was really reduced...

The idea was to not interfere too much with the recording; just obtain a good recording and try to treat the material as little as possible. It's more about volume and very little frequency adjustment, and that was basically it.

WHEN IT COMES TO RECORDING LATIN INSTRUMENTS, WERE THERE ANY PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES THAT YOU LEARNED FROM STUDYING LATIN RECORDS OR LOCAL MUSICIANS IN SANTIAGO?

We actually recorded German musicians in Cologne, so the recording process is very untypical; it's not the way that one would expect it to be as a listener. You'd think, "Ah, it's a band recording with Latinos playing or session musicians playing together." It's the opposite. After I laid out the basic idea of the songs, we wrote the scores and arrangements. And so we had sheets of notes and scores. Then we brought in one musician and just recorded notes. We never recorded the whole horn section and the bass player never played with the percussion player. They all played on top of a template I built. Afterwards, when I'm back with my material in my studio in Santiago, I cut it up and bring it into one template or have it sound as if they had really played together. I can say that I have really touched manually every single note on this album—every hit, every note. Everything which was played, I have at some stage moved or replaced or copied and pasted it to something else.

MANY OF THE SEÑOR COCONUT RECORDINGS GAVE ME THE IMPRESSION THEY WERE RECORDED LIVE IN A LARGE MUSIC HALL SINCE THERE'S A BIT OF AN ECHO IN THE SOUNDS.

It's not at all [laughs]. It's really the opposite. It's like slices and layers of musicians, some of them not knowing each other. Even sometimes the bass player is playing a different groove than the percussion player because they're playing on a different template. So, very often, the whole recording sounds quite not together. To me, making music is a big puzzle or a patchwork of all kinds of elements, only audio files. That's the fun part.

Around the World and the *El Baile Alemán* reissue are out now on Nacional Records. senor-coconut.com



IN SEÑOR COCONUT'S STUDIO, APPLE G4 POWERBOOK 12", 1.33 GHZ, PRO TOOLS DIGI 002 RACK RUNNING WITH PT 6.4, MEYER SOUND NEARFIELD MONITORS, AND MICROKORG



ARTIST TIPS ANTHONY ROTHER

To blame the entire nu-electro revival on Anthony Rother might be a bit unfair. But suffice it to say, the Offenbach, Germany-based producer was a central linchpin in bringing icy bass and synths back to life in the late '90s. Rother has since drifted all over the place musically—from experimental works on FAX to the EBM and harder techno that he both makes and distributes via his Datapunk label, which just released its third *We Are Punks* compilation—but the driving, connective force of his sound has always been the drum machine. Here we tap him for his five favorite synthesized drum sources. *Ken Taylor*

ELEKTRON MACHINEDRUM

The Elektron Machinedrum is one of my favorite drum synthesizers. I used it on "Don't Worry" and have been using it on newer productions as well. For me, the key features are its sound, the modulation of sounds, and the potential for using external samples.

JOMOX XBASE 888

I used this one on the upcoming new Telekraft/Anthony Rother single "Hot Chocolate In the Milkyway." It's the newest drum computer in my studio and it really surprised me when I started to work with it. It's second to only the Roland TR-808 in terms of delivering the fattest analog kick on this planet—the whole sound is very warm and fat. It's so powerful that it doesn't need any extra EQs or compressors.

ROLAND TR-808

It's hard to say anything new about this Roland masterpiece. The TR-808 is the queen of drum synthesizers and its sound is still state-of-the-art. All of the sounds are timeless and I use them all often in my productions. In fact, all of the drum programming on *Sex With the Machines* was done with the 808.

ROLAND TR-909

If the 808 is the queen, then the 909 is the king of techno drum computers—and it's also an often-heard element in my songs, but particularly on "Bad to the Bone," as the toms are a key 909 feature. My 909 has a technical defect, so it plays the bass drum slightly lower than normal. I hope it never has to go to in for technical service as I want it to have this defect forever.

NOVATION DRUMSTATION

The Novation DrumStation is definitely the best 808/909 hardware clone on the market. I used it on "When the Sun Goes Down," and I still use it a lot. I really love the sound architecture and its pitch-shifting and distortion possibilities. Also, the full MIDI control is a great feature. One of its best features, though, is its ability to change the start point of the sounds.

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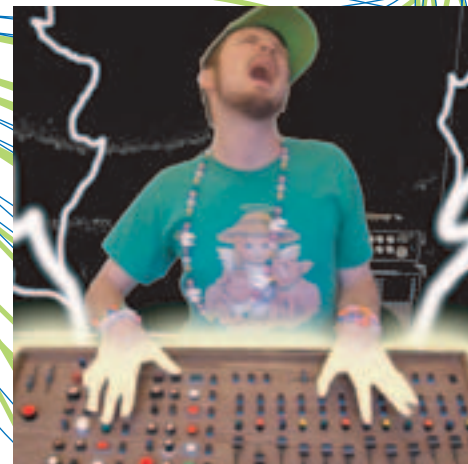
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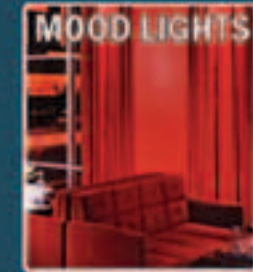
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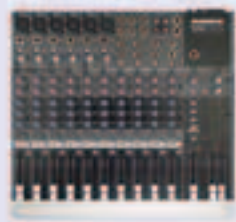
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Drop a 'Load on 'Em

Screw packaging! The future of gaming is downloading. *Words* Ryan Rayhill

When you buy a \$60 dollar game at the old brick-and-mortar, what are you paying for exactly? A case, an instruction booklet, and a disc that, in most cases, likely only features a few hours of solid gameplay. While most gamers and large game companies still focus on developing and marketing these big-budget titles and all of their expensive trappings, the advent of downloadable content—which many see as the future of the industry—has really opened the door for new, innovative ideas and tried-and-true content to get to consumers more quickly and with a much more affordable price tag. *XLR8R* takes a look at some of the best titles out there for download on your favorite consoles.



BRAID



Xbox 360: Xbox Live Arcade

Castle Crashers (The Behemoth/Microsoft)

Up to four players can take on the role of Munny-esque knights out to rescue princesses kidnapped by an evil wizard and his hoard of barbarians... Sure, the story is trite, but that isn't why *Castle Crashers* is awesome. This tongue-in-cheek take on old-school side-scrolling adventure games like *Streets of Rage* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* mixes comical button-mashing action with a gorgeous cel-shaded look that never wears on the eyes.

Braid (Number None Inc./Microsoft)

Essentially a *Mario*-style platforming game, each level of *Braid* revolves around the concepts of time and distance. In pursuit of a princess, your character (an average guy in a suit named Tim) is able to reverse time at any given moment; each level reacts to this ability differently to constantly keep you thinking. While its name seemingly has little to do with its content, *Braid's* fresh take on a tired genre—and its thought-provoking ending—makes it one of the most interesting titles in recent memory.

Age of Booty (Certain Affinity/Capcom)

It sounds like a pretty sweet porno, but *Age of Booty* is actually a strategy title that delves into the realm of high seas adventure! Relying on resources like gold and rum, you must navigate your pirate vessel through a series of hexes, working your way towards coastal towns in an effort to rape and plunder as many of them as possible. Okay, you don't actually rape anyone in the game. But if recent news has taught us anything, it's that pirates these days sure have great PR people. Who knows what all they are getting away with, those saucy drunks!



THE LAST GUY



PlayStation 3: PlayStation Network

Fat Princess (Titan Studios)

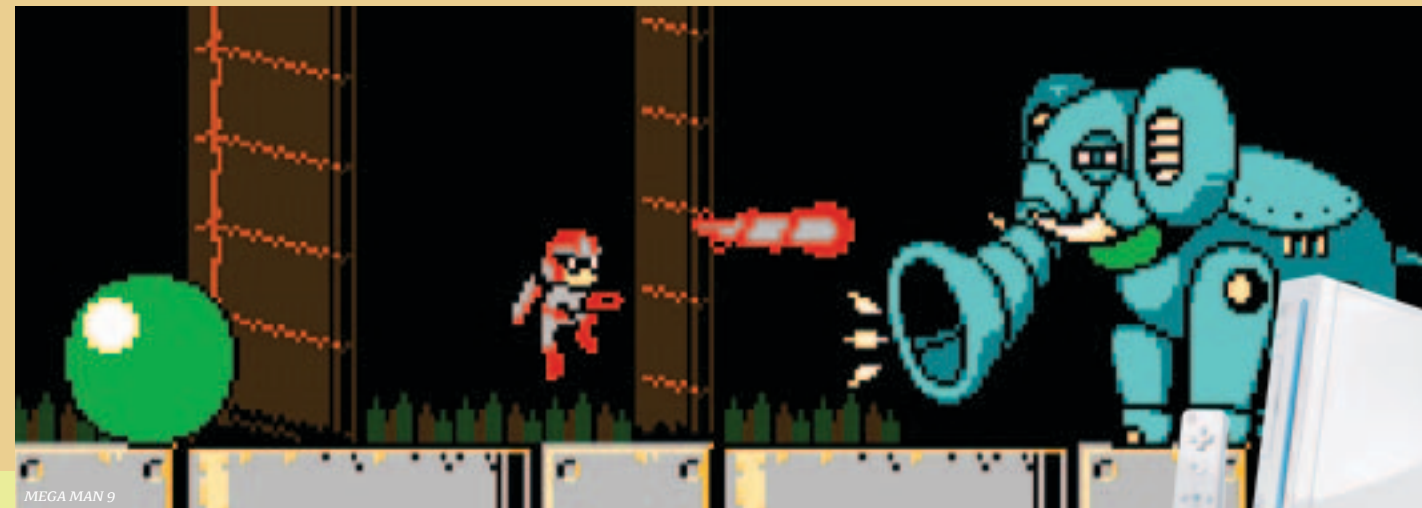
Perhaps one of the most un-PC titles out there, *Fat Princess* is also one of the more creatively themed multiplayer titles to date. Essentially a game of "capture the flag," *Fat Princess* pits teams of up to 32 players against each other; each team attempts to capture the other team's princess and bring her back to its own base. Once there, your team must fend off the opposition while feeding the captive princess cakes and pies until she grows so girthy that she becomes near-immovable by the other team. Awesomely insensitive to the big 'uns!

The Last Guy (Sony)

With the amount of games that have focused on the forthcoming zombie apocalypse you would think that the well would have run dry by now. *The Last Guy*, however, proves that you would be sorely mistaken! As the titular guy, you must traverse over a dozen undead-infested cities around the globe, rendered similarly to Google Earth's satellite imagery, searching for survivors and tactically guiding them to safety all while brain-munching nasties are in hot pursuit.

Wipeout HD (Sony Liverpool)

As one of the first games released for the original PlayStation back in 1995, the *Wipeout* series has become synonymous with Sony's machines ever since. Now *Wipeout HD*, the futuristic racing series' first downloadable title for the PS3, offers even more ridiculous speed, amazing control, and a soundtrack from artists like Kraftwerk and Stanton Warriors, setting the high watermark by which all other racers on the platform are measured.



MEGA MAN 9

Nintendo Wii: Wii Ware

Strong Bad's Cool Game for Attractive People (Telltale Games)

This five-part point-and-click game (*à la* old-school Sierra games), based on the adventures of interweb superstars Strong Bad and Homestar Runner, features oodles of scenarios, characters, and in-jokes from the cartoon and enough pop-culture references and humor for non-fans to get into the ridiculousness as well. Everything from other videogames to *Shaft* gets the Strong Bad treatment here.

Mega Man 9 (Inti Creates/Capcom)

Of the handful of characters to have survived from the NES days, Mega Man is second only to Mario on the unfuckwithable scale. The developers of *Mega Man 9* knew this and proved that a new adventure featuring the Blue Bomber didn't need all the bells and whistles of current-gen technology. Nay! Mega Man is such a badass that he can be presented in classic retro style—and not only does this game remain relevant but it's actually more fun to play than most of today's slickest looking titles.

World of Goo (2D Boy)

Pretty much what it says it is, *World of Goo* requires you to build all manner of structures, from towers to bridges, out of living gelatinous blobules. You must overcome various obstacles (chasms, cliffs) to reach a pipe at the other end of the level, which, after sucking you in, transports you to the next level. An excellent atmospheric soundtrack and multiplayer add to the sticky fun!

Words Ryan Rayhill



loading...

XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.



It's a new year! We have a new prez! *Aaaand*, it's fucking freezing. Like ridonkulous cold. Again! While you wait for global warming to kick in, why not stay in, sip a toddy potion, fire up the ol' HDTV, and warm your cockles by the light of these hot-as-hell games?

One of the biggest games to kick early '09 square in the pants is the long-awaited one-on-one brawler *Street Fighter IV* (Capcom; Xbox 360, PS3). With amazing new art direction that will blow your face clean away when you see it in motion, *SFIV* also brings new fighters and features into play while retaining the easy-to-learn/hard-to-master precision controls that kept us on the "most likely to get our asses kicked for real in the mall parking lot" list back in the series' '90s arcade heyday.

While 50 Cent may not be the pop-culture powerhouse he was a few years ago, you must admit that the guy knows how to stay in the mix. His latest gaming effort, *50 Cent: Blood in the Sand* (THQ; Xbox 360, PS3), has a story that is about as ridiculous as it gets: G-Unit is performing in the Middle East when the diamond skull they were supposed to get paid with is stolen! 50 and his crew must regulate as only they know how! Guns blazin', son! Nevertheless, the game features compelling

multi-player action and even exclusive tracks by the man himself.

First announced nearly four years ago, *Killzone 2* (Sony; PS3) comes correct this month as Sony's first big title of the year. Take part in an interplanetary military strike against the encroaching Helghast aliens that finds you not only battling the militaristic beings but also their planet itself, which has its own ways of letting you know you aren't welcome. With super-stylized cinematic action and storytelling, this first-person shooter also allows for up to 64 players to battle it out online.

For those wanting a little less alien invasion and a little more Tony Hawk in the dystopian near-future, *Skate 2* (EA; Xbox 360, PS3) hits this month. After an earthquake rocks the city of San Vanelona, mass destruction (and a skater's dream!) is left in its wake. Despite a private military corp blocking off the best parts of the city, *Skate 2* lets you manipulate the environment in a variety of ways so that almost any crappy back alley can become your own skate park, allowing for all manner of competition and wikkid tricks.

Based on the manga and anime of the same name, *Afro Samurai* (Namco Bandai; Xbox 360, PS3) is set in a futuristic Japan that

has awesomely reverted back to feudalism, complete with assassins, swordplay, and codes of honor! Voiced by the ubiquitous Samuel L. Jackson, *Afro Samurai* delivers some of the most visually stunning, bloody hack-and-slash action we've seen to date.

Delivering the first Master Chief-less *Halo* game is a daunting proposition. Add that to the fact that it's also a real-time strategy game (and not the usual run-and-gun epic) and you might even start to feel bad for *Halo Wars* (Microsoft; Xbox 360). But shed not tear one! *Halo Wars* not only delivers on the promise of a fully fleshed-out *Halo* Universe but also the ability to control full-scale battles between the UNSC forces and the vile Covenant aliens! It's like a kick-ass game of chess with space marines and lasers instead of plastic vicars!

We could rattle off a lot of facts about our final title of the month, *Onechanbara: Bikini Samurai Squad* (D3; Xbox 360), but all you really need to know is this: You manipulate hot Japanese chicks in bikinis and cowboy hats that use samurai swords to cut a swath through zombie-plagued Tokyo. That work for you, Jinky? Though so.

1. *SKATE 2*
2. *KILLZONE 2*
3. *HALO WARS*
4. *STREET FIGHTER IV*

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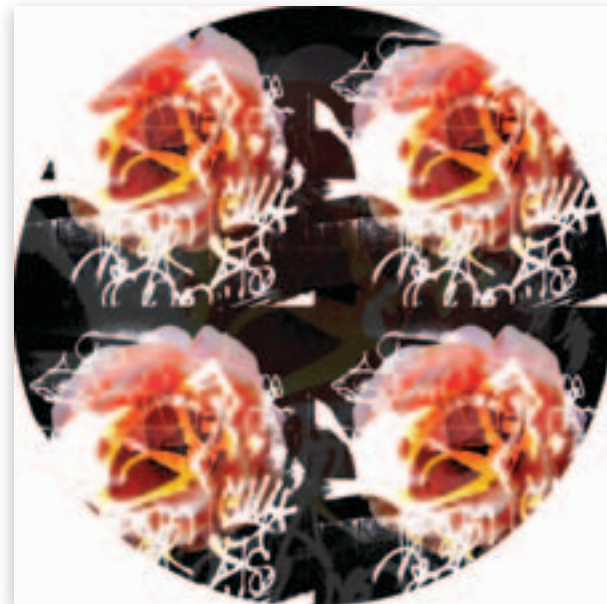
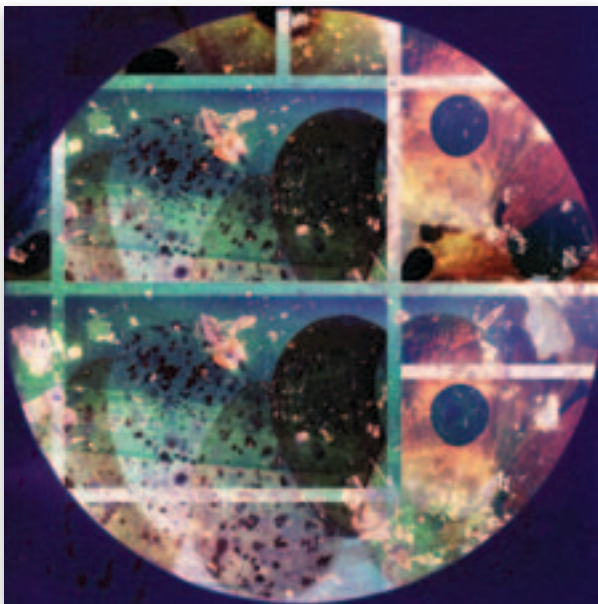
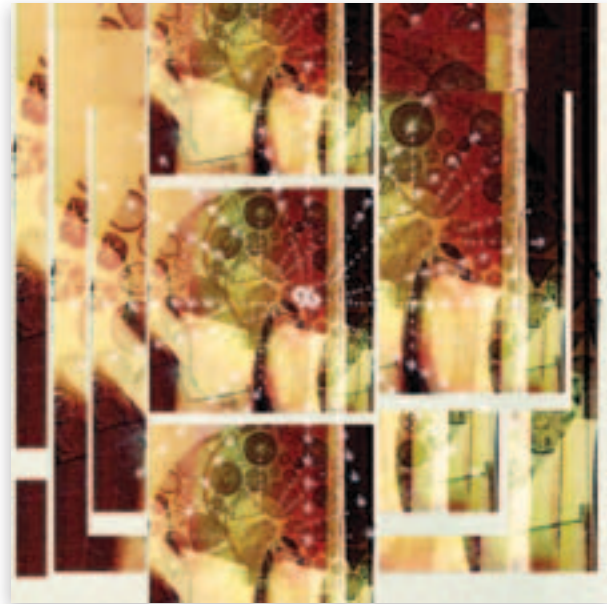
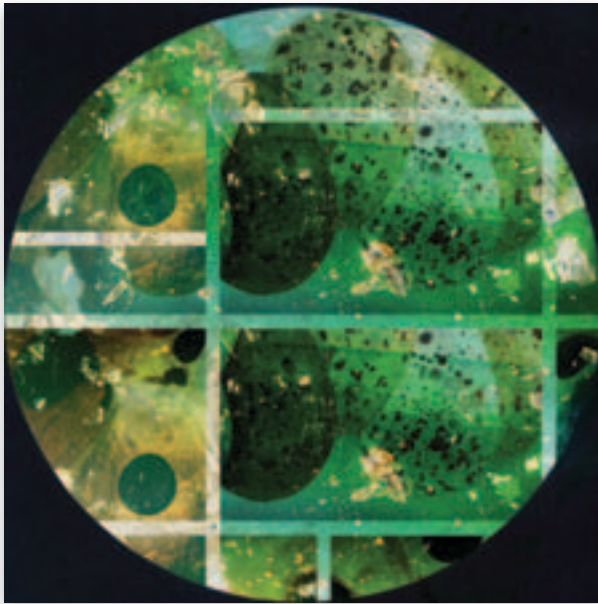
John Foxx's progeny takes on the digital age, one study in exclusivity at a time.

Left:
Karborn
exclusive for *XL&R*,
"Unknown-Master,"
2008

While most sons rebel against their parents, 23-year-old East Londoner John Leigh (a.k.a. Karborn) embraced his father's creative and pioneering ways. Leigh the elder is John Foxx, ex-Ultravox frontman and electronic music savant, who pushed the sonic boundaries of the British new wave scene in the late '70s and early '80s. Karborn's penchant for digital-image manipulation was formed in his early teens and he has since been peddling his beautiful, multimedia craft via live AV sets, canvases, and prints, which all came together in perfect, symbiotic unison at his debut solo exhibition during last year's Sónar Festival in Barcelona.

Karborn is also very much the storyteller, piecing his work with creative prose and music. The spacey lows of dubstep and the tinkering of old-school electronica fuel the Bow E3 resident, as do the underlying ideas of value and exclusivity in such a disposable era of music and art. Two stunning projects that reflect this approach are his recent AV collaboration with Foxx on "Burning Car" (exhibited at Art Kandy/Austin Gallery in East London) and an exclusive upcoming series of dub lacquers called *Platonic*, which pair musicians and visual artists (including Various Production, Burial, Zomby, Amon Tobin, Suede's Brett Anderson, Dubterror, Starkey, and Rusko) on one-off dubplates—one side of audio with handcrafted art on the flip.

After a string of solo shows at London's Brick Lane and Austin galleries, and a live music-art collaboration with musicians at Affiliates-Studios' Thugs & Hugs event, Karborn let us into his London-centric car-crash world of art, sound, and technology.



Above: "Long Lost,"
2008

Introduce us to your art alias and your work.

[I'm] the urban romantic. I've been working on the grind for almost a decade now. I've been living in secret gardens in moody cities all my life and the works are my stories I find therein.

How was it growing up in a creative household?

In the house there were some great artworks by my father and because he made music, [there were] synthesizers and electronic kits. It was briefly a very beautiful household, and became more turbulent as time went by. But I listened to my old man's stories about the world and he told me how to understand things and be inquisitive, more than anything

else. I don't think he wanted to force that kind of thing on me or invade my life with it. Being a teenager, it was up to me to do that for myself.

How about before your teenage years? How did music and art affect you?

I wasn't exposed loads to it. I spent most of my childhood outside in the fields and woodlands of England. It was ghost stories, a small chemistry set, books, and nature around me that I appreciated and played with.

So what was it that inspired you to start making art?

The dissatisfaction I found within the education system and the desire to manifest

my ideas and be good at something I found beautiful, exciting, challenging, and full of questions and answers. I played outside and collected bird eggs and dried insects as a child. I painted sci-fi models as a teenager and made landscapes out of things I found. The computer was exciting and new, and my generation was exposed to them from an early age to use them as another tool in the kit. They were so bizarre and incredible, unnatural and weird and curious.

Who was the first artist that really impacted you?

A strange cyber-punk '80s French anime series called *Ulysses 31*. Big heads of Greek gods floating in outer space, hyper-real color, spaceships, and re-appropriated myths as the



Right:
"Long Lost,"
2006



Above: "Burning Car," 2008
stories. That, as well as the unusual jungle and electronica videos I got my hands on as a young one.

One of the pieces that you are most well known for is "Burning Car." What does that piece mean to you?

The "Burning Car" project took the form of vinyl, video, and printed artworks. [I put] all these parts together, collaborating with dubstep producer Dubterror on the remixes of two wonderfully deep, dark, and sparse John Foxx productions from the late '70s, which sound more relevant today than they did before. The artworks were constructed as visual translations of the audio productions.

Very limited prints surfaced, and are now sold out. This is how it should be done.

What's the story behind the Lost & Found series? It's quite different from your other work.

I create an ongoing series of quick drawings on cardboard, usually from old vinyl sleeves. These are off-the-mark pieces, done very quickly, and get me away from the lengthy, detailed, and relatively elaborate productions I was used to. They are sent out, left [in random places], given away. It is fantastically satisfying to paint one after the other for a few hours and build a stack of unique original pieces.

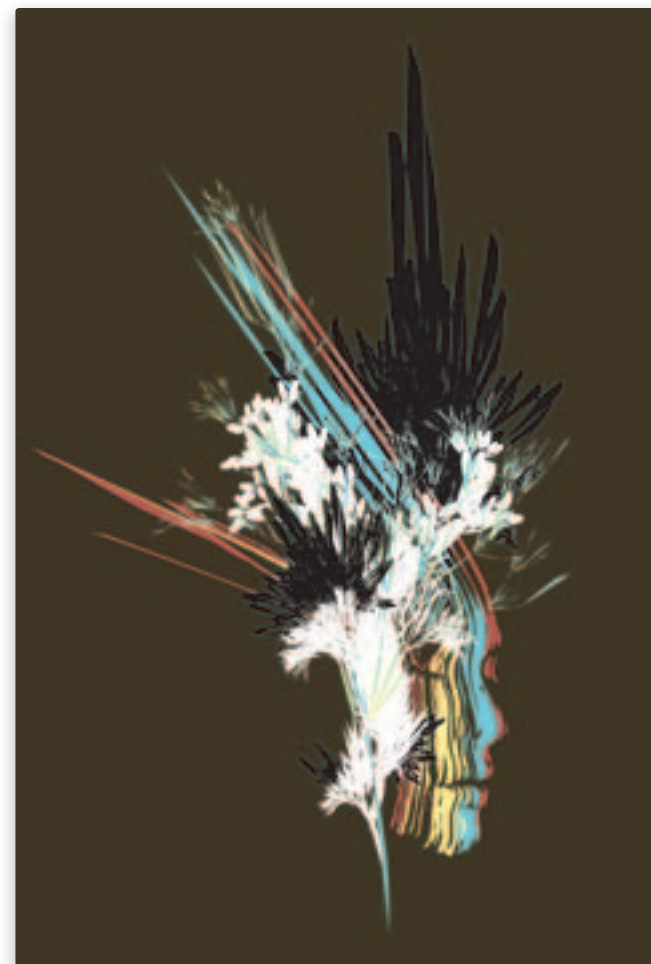
Musically, who inspires you and why?

The artists we are assembling for *Platonic* are the producers and artists I am most inspired by. Everything is built around a deep appreciation of music and sound. Electronic producers and musicians are the most interesting to me—manifestations of man and machine.

What are your thoughts on the current state of art and music in London?

That London is lucky to have such a tight chemical reaction of all sorts. It's deservedly difficult to make waves, but as you do, the people and city become more and more embracing. We are watching our generation

From left:
"Sync," 2007;
"Platonic," 2008.



turn up with all their colors and flags high, to wrestle with their qualities and collaborations and find out what they mean to themselves. I want to have some stories to tell when I get to be an old man, so it is the right place to live young and test yourself.

How does London inspire you as an artist?

It's an old city, a scruffy city in many respects, too. It's had many of the greatest artists in the world live here. You want to know what lives under the hood. You know the history is almost unaccountable, it's so vast here. And it feels that way, too—the shifting city. There is something romantic to it. It increased my love of nature and I always want to find a secret

door that would lead me into an imperfect, overgrown garden. It's here somewhere.

Talk us through your exclusive XLR8R piece.

Rip-torn-nature-born. The playful urban vandal in ancient ivory heads floating through petals, observing and poaching a peek at the next steps. Into the machines and back out, printed, painted, pasted, and assembled on gold leaf with petals under shattered glass varnish. A culmination of my styles and techniques, it is something I could really duck and weave with.

Your work asks the question: technology or art?

I want to use what's available. It isn't good or bad—it just is. It's a chance to figure out how these new technologies sit with our productions. They don't replace anything, but add to [them]. I don't like cold machines, but I don't like hippie nature either. I enjoy the unusual unpredictable harmonies together with the sensitivity and ruthless obedience of these dirty machines.

karborn.com, vis-ed.net/karborn,
platonicplatonic.com

TBC

Girly G

Pharrell's muse and the femming up of hip-hop.

Words Marke B
Illustration Saelee Oh



So, so many questions sprang to the tip of my queer tongue when I spotted Pharrell Williams of The Neptunes rocking an oversized Purplesaurus-colored purse on the June 2008 cover of *Paper*. Had his recent collab with Madonna eroded the rapper's testosterone banks? Was homegirl Beyonce rubbing off some Sasha Fierce? Does he even realize what lavender shades do to one's skin tone? (The risks!)

The accompanying article, which focused on Pharrell's Billionaire Boys Club fashion empire, did little to help resolve such queries:

"Don't call it a murse," he says, pulling out his second look from the gargantuan purple croc Hermès tote, which he has accessorized with another Jacob keychain, this one covered in yellow diamonds to match the bag's gold hardware."

Honey, I'd never call *anything* a "murse"—not with an incurable flesh-eating disease called MRSA spreading around, and not with the kicky "manbag" option readily available.

Instances of fashion femminess have been rampant in hip-hop of late, causing a lot of masculinity-insecure

haters to wonder if the ballers' club got stealth-fagged while Jay-Z was out getting his eyebrows waxed. Pharrell's purple personalized Hermès, Lil Wayne's come-hither chicken poses (and purported daddy relationship with the Birdman), Nelly's hot pink leather ensembles, the massive attack of blipster neon cravats, a glut of tranny-licious dance crazes from Tamechi's juicy "Poak Chops" to the New Orleans "sissy bounce" movement... and wasn't that will.i.am dressed as the leather Village Person in his "It's a New Day" vid? Plus, you know, just Gym Class Heroes in general. There was even a loathsomely funny vid viralizing around last summer called "You Gay, Nigga!" wherein an unfortunate black poser in skinny jeans, white frames, and a flaring *keffiyeh* was set upon by two sweat-suited thugs wielding baseball bats. Gay bashing at its finest.

Gender-bending is nothing new—and extremely marketable—in black music, from Jimmy Scott's reedy croak to Sly Stone's glittery platforms and hemp-weave choker, Big Daddy Kane's tangle of golden bangles to Snoop Dogg's luxurious Persian cat full-lengths. Such girly signifiers are more about cocky peacocking than outright cross-dressing—African kingly to African-American blingy. (Although it's interesting that there's a concurrent movement among hip-hop's women, with

Janelle Monae's android-androgynous ska suits and pompadour, Yo Majesty's proud-dyke drop jeans, and Beyonce's new jam "If I Were a Boy.")

And getting a little fussy with your accessories certainly doesn't mean you're limp-wristed: just ask Prince, elfin queen of mascara, whose recent homophobic comments to the *New Yorker* (since clumsily retracted) proved that the naughty bits of 1999 were all a put-on. In fact, it was Andre 3000 of OutKast's re-Princeification of hip-hop in the early aughts that opened the current door to more sexually ambiguous expressions—the softer side of rap, if you will. And he's more man than a thousand downlow Fiddies. I'm speaking hypothetically, of course.

What's different now is that hip-hop hipsters like Pharrell may not be slinging aspirational women's apparel for the freak effect alone—they're comfy with their options... And if you gotta haul outfits, you might as well do it with Hermès.

As hip-hop moves farther away from the hard-edged hoodrat-ness of gangsta rap into the more fluorescent realms of electro and prog-rock indie, of course it'll ditch the dead-end Rocawear aesthetic and explore more timely duds. Good for it, and for us. Time to call an 8XL t-shirt a dress and move on, sucka. Text me when Ludacris flashes his satin butt-floss.

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